

THE
HAUNTED ISLAND

E. H. VISIAK

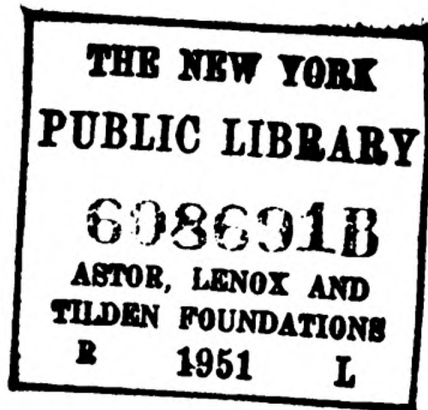
THE HAUNTED ISLAND

A PIRATE ROMANCE

By
E. H. VISIAK

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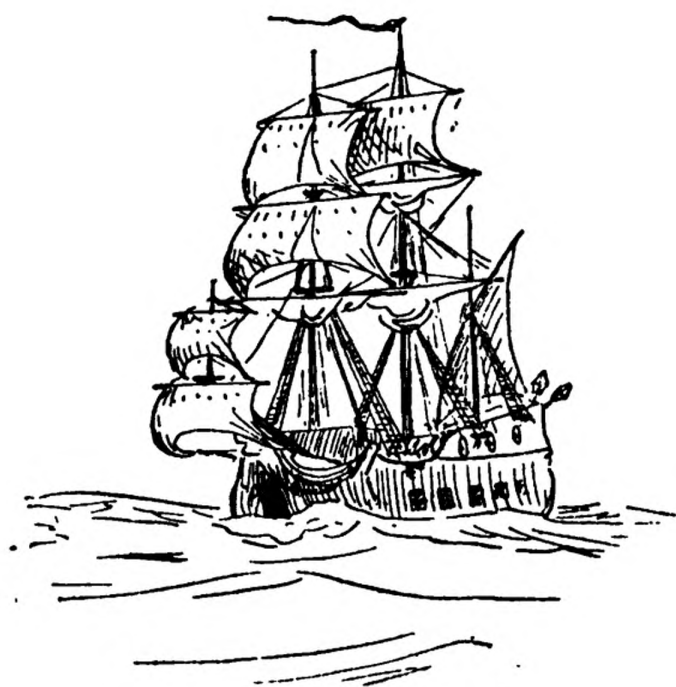
THE HAUNTED ISLAND

A PIRATE ROMANCE

Being the History of an Adventure to an Island in the Remote South Sea. Of a Wizard there. Of his Pirate Gang; His Treasure; His Combustible; His Skeleton Antic Lad. Of his Wisdom; Of his Poesy; His Barbarous Cruelty; His Mighty Power. Of a Volcan on the Island. And of the Ghostly Terror.

TO
MY MOTHER

Massachusetts Book Shop - Oct 17 1937



CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. SCAMPERING AWAY	11
II. FRANCIS DREAMS A DREAM	19
III. THE CASTAWAYS	22
IV. VILLAINY	27
V. THE ENGLISHMAN'S RELATION. (THE ISLAND)	32
VI. THE ENGLISHMAN'S RELATION CONTINUED. (THE CELL)	38
VII. A HORRIBLE VILLAIN	47
VIII. THALASS	51
IX. OUVERY DELIVERS UP THE CHART	56
X. WE FALL IN WITH THE FLEET OF CAPTAIN MORGAN. THE BUCCANEER'S HUT.	59
XI. THE MAD MAROON	75
XII. THE WARNING SEA	85
XIII. THE GHOST	91
XIV. THE CUT CABLE	100
XV. THE ISLAND OF THE HOLY	104

CHAP.	PAGE
XVI. SPIES OF CANAAN	106
XVII. DOCTOR COPICUS	114
XVIII. THE RUNNING MAN	120
XIX. THE CLOISTERS. THE DOCTOR AND THE VOLCAN	127
XX. THE PHANTOM VOICE	133
XXI. THE MANUSCRIPTS	138
XXII. THE GLORIOUS PIRATE	142
XXIII. HEY-DIDDLE-DIDDLE!	145
XXIV. A CURSE FALLS UPON THE WOLVES	148
XXV. A GAUDY PICTURE IN A DARK FRAME	153
XXVI. THE TREASURE CHAMBER	162
XXVII. FRANCIS FINDS HIS BROTHER'S WATCH	168
XXVIII. THE GHOST FACE	172
XXIX. THE FLOAT. THE WALKING LAD	176
XXX. HOW NOW?	180
XXXI. NEITHER ONE NOR THE OTHER	184
XXXII. HELL SHORE	188
<hr/>	
SUPPLEMENT	192

THE HAUNTED ISLAND

CHAPTER I.

SCAMPERING AWAY.

ON Christmas Eve, 1668, I, Francis Clayton, was with my brother Dick at Clayton Manor, our father's house. 'Tis seated on the bottom of a Bay near Wembury, on the sea coast of Devon. My brother served in quality of lieutenant on board His Majesty's ship *Tiger*, and was but late returned from a cruise off the Island of Jamaica. His ship lay at anchor in the bay.

We sat over against one another on the hearth, in my little snug room. The Squire and the servants were a-bed. The great old house slept, with starting and creaking of the timbers. The fire was sunk together, burning with a clear glow ; the candles were wasted to the snuff in their sockets.

My brother told a marvellous tale of the South Sea, of an island there haunted by spirits, particularly by a monstrous great ghoul, or devil.

"Many rumours," said he, "are gotten abroad of this enchanted island. 'Tis said that he who laid up the treasure had a truck with the devil,

and that a frightful fiend hath guard over it. I do certainly know 'tis there. As to the rest, I am nothing concerned with such fantastic gear. Once ashore there," said he, "and not all the devils in hell shall keep me from the treasure! Yet, if seamen who have seen the Thing be not extremely out, 'tis a pretty wight! The head of it, say they, reaches unto the clouds, and the appearance of it is frightful out of all description."

There came a sudden tap-tapping in the wainscoting. It was, no doubt, but a rat; but, I must confess, I shrank with fear of it: whereupon my brother clapped me boisterously on the shoulder, crying:

"Hallo, my land-captain! Did you think it was the ghosts from the Haunted Island? I'll show you something to cheer you up."

Hereupon, clapping hand to pocket, he plucked forth a little box, or casket. It was of gold, very cunningly wrought with the representation of a galleon; and her hull was of rubies, her sails of pearls, her flag and flowing pendants of emeralds and sapphires, and the sea of amethyst.

It was exquisite, and I said so; but my brother bade me read what was written on a piece of parchment that he took from the box and laid open before me.

"I know you like poesy," said he, "read it. 'Tis better than a sonnet to my lady's shoe-latchet!"

The writing was old and small, and thus it was:

Go you not nigh the island, Captain ;
Go you not close abroad :
For death would ride on every side,
And hell on your steerboard.

As I was sailing the sea, Captain,
Beyond the Mexique bay,
A mickle blast the good ship cast
A monstrous long south way.

Blind ran the ship as a blind antler ;
And ever her beside,
There rode a drear and hooded fear,
Till we the isle espied.

We anchored off the island, Captain ;
We lay off cables four :
I swear by bell, 'twas mickle well
We went not nearer shore.

It came in the midnight hour, Captain :
As God's eye seeth me,
I never ween'd that such a fiend
In earth or hell might be.

Praise to the Mother of God, Captain,
Be praise and gramercy :
An image stood of the blest rood
Nailed to our mainmast tree.

Here the ballad was broken off. I asked what it was ; but had never answer. For, on a sudden, a summons loud and long sounded upon the Manor door.

"Hallo! What's this?" cried I. But my brother said nothing ; only got from his chair, and stepped to the casement ; as I did also. He drew the shutter ; and we peered without upon the avenue. 'Twas a wintry and a weird prospect : the moon shone bleak through the

scantly falling snow, which was flurried about in drifts of powder on the frozen ground. The tall elms stood gauntly up, the smaller branches of them stirring in sudden movements, like hands and fingers. But at the great door there was a little fat man in the uniform of the captain of a King's ship. He stood panting, his face fiery red; and kept pummelling with his cane upon the flagstones.

"Why, 'tis the captain of your ship!" said I. "'Tis Captain Skinton!" But, muttering in his teeth, Dick turned and hurried from the room. I followed, to find him at the end of the corridor warily withdrawing the arras. We looked through.

The Captain addressed the serving-man who had opened to him, and was beside himself with passion. He spoke in rapid and high-pitched tones, and with robustious gesticulation. We caught a tail-end: "—that I see Squire Clayton this night!"

"But he's a-bed, your honour," says Roger.

"Then wake him! wake him! wake him!" cried the little man; and, stamping by misadventure a gouty foot, he broke into a paroxysm of rage, just as the Squire, our father, came forth on the gallery of the stairs.

"What's this? What's this?" says he, looking down in his nightcap.

"What's this, sir?" cries Skinton, his voice rising shrill, "what's this, sir? Why, your son, sir . . . a conspiracy, sir, a conspiracy aboard my ship, *my* ship, sir!"

“Roger,” says the Squire, “how came you to admit this neighing rascal? Show him into the stable!”

Hereupon the Captain became perfectly furious; but the Squire returned him word for word, as hot as he gave, so that there fell a very great clamour. And, in the hurly-burly, Dick stole past them into the hall, I following; and so (the door having been left open), out into the night.

We scoured down the avenue, crossed the road beyond, and, striking into the countryside, cut crisply across the frozen fields to the cliff-top; then down, helter-skelter, to the shore.

A great ship lay at an anchor close in, with her sails hauled up in brails. It was the *Tiger*. Her captain's boat lay beached above the breakers; and her crew walked up and down, to keep them warm. My brother stepped to the coxswain, “’Tis I, John,” said he, as he got his breath; and, to the rest, he said: “Back to the ship, men! Our plans are at a head! All's ready! I'll make all your fortunes, my jolly boys!”

“Ay, ay, sir! ay, ay!” But he bade them hush, and hasten with the boat. Thereupon, turning to me, “Get you back to the Manor!” says he.

“No; I go with you,” said I.

He looked me up and down: “Tut, tut, d'ye know where we're bound? For the South Sea, and on none of the King's business either!”

“You're going to steal the ship!” said I; but they were shoving off the boat, and, before ever

he could answer, or I take thought, we found ourselves aboard and rolling over the waves. Soon there fell a great barking of dogs from the direction of the Manor ; whereupon my brother did urge the rowers to greater effort. A few moments after we reached the ship.

We went aboard at the gang-way. There stood a big, black-bearded fellow, who passed on board in the style of the Quartermaster. My brother spoke a word in his ear, and the man nodded.

"All have joined, Ouvery?" asked Dick.

"Ay, but the master and Surgeon Burke be aboard. They went not ashore with the rest."

"'Sdeath!" said Dick with his teeth, "where are they, then?"

"The master's in his cabin: Burke's in the round-house."

"Overboard with the master! Let him swim, the preaching swab! But we'll have need of Burke. Have up the men; I'll speak to 'em. Haste, Ouvery!"

He made to the quarter-deck as he spoke, while the other went below. Soon was heard the boatswain's whistle, and the mariners began to come up on deck. Meantime there came a splashing under the stern, and the master swam presently forth within sight. Having gotten his breath, he began to shout threats and imprecations at my brother. But Dick laughed, and shook his finger at him, crying:

"Nay, nay, sweet sir, be not so prodigal with your strength! I warrant you'll need all of it anon!"

On this, with a last imprecation, the swimmer turned, and incontinently made towards the shore. But the mariners were now gotten all up on deck, and my brother prepared to speak to them.

But no speech was made by him. For a musket-shot rang out on the shore, and some half-dozen men, led by the Captain and the Squire, came forth on the cliff—the Captain shouting and gesticulating with the smoking musket that he held ; but our father stood like a man sore stricken, so that it went to my heart to see him. I turned to my brother :

“Go you no further with this,” said I. “Return while yet you may.”

But he did not answer me ; he stood staring to windward, and I saw his face set hard. A big ship, flying the flag of St. George, had hove in sight round a bend of the cliff.

Next moment he turned ; and, bawling out, “In with the boat !” cried he, “All hands make sail ! Up anchor and away !”

There fell a great ado on this, as the mariners went to work to the shrill piping whistle of the boatswain, and the word of command. Soon the cable was hove in, while the seamen sang as they strained at the capstan. Soon the ship began to move, stretching away under her spritsail and topsails to the shore-breeze.

But the other vessel had hoisted up her top-gallant sails, and came on apace ; and now, being but a cable’s length away, she shot off a gun.

“Come on, ye dogs !” cried Dick. “Fire away, and split !” And he hasted to the poop, where

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the gunners worked, charging of the stern-chasers.

“Double shot ’em, and cripple her!” said he.

“Ay, ay, sir! ay, ay!” But now the pursuer fired again, and a round-shot crashed into our round-house coach.

“*Fire!*” and, upon the word, the guns belched forth flame. The report shook the ship, and a cloud of cannon-smoke rolled up like a scroll.

As it cleared, our men roared out with a great cheering; for we had hit the King’s ship full in her fore rigging, split her spritsail, smashed her foreyard, and handsomely mauled the shrouds. The foremast shook with the brunt, and the top-sail came clattering down.

Hereupon my brother fell to capering about like a silly schoolboy.

“Well done, master gunner!” cried he, “well done, my brave! Give him another cheer, my jolly boys! They’ll not take us, this bout!”

CHAPTER II.

FRANCIS DREAMS A DREAM.

WE now rapidly left the floundering and mazed man-of-war. But our men kept firing into the medley on her decks, plying the stern-chasers in furious haste ; and, ever as he was able, the enemy did shoot at us with muskets and pistols, and once—his ship having slewed right round—gave us a thundering great broadside. But his gunners did much mistake, in that they hulled us (as the saying is), instead of aiming at our masts and tackling, whereby they might have crippled us, and, perhaps, brought us quite to a stand.

As it was, our ship took no great hurt, though the splinters flew, and six of her ports were battered in ; yet many of our men were wounded after a dreadful manner, and one was killed outright. Whereupon such brutish and demoniac fury came upon the rest as transported them like very devils.

Our decks were bloody like a slaughter-house ; and from the spar-deck the wounded men roared out very grievously as Surgeon Burke wrought upon them, so that their groans and shrieks did mingle with the horrid blasphemies.

Now, all this time my brother, the Captain,

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did frantically rage as hot as any man ; yea, so far beside himself was he, that, when he found we drew out of gunshot and could no longer murder the King's men, he was for going about and returning upon them. He had even given the order to bear up the helm ; but hereupon, to my huge surprise, the Quartermaster did interpose. 'Twas no more than a look and a word, but it availed, and the order was immediately revoked.

We now lay right out of the bay ; and, having set studding sails, stood off to sea, whilst the decks were cleared, the broken ports stopped, and the bolts and tackling overhauled. But I, being sick at heart, went and shut myself in the master's cabin, which I found empty ; and, a great weariness coming over me, I got me into a hammock, and presently slept.

I dreamed a fearful dream ; and it seemed to me that one went before me through a gully in a terrible high cliff. And the gully became dark and darker as we went, and its sheer sides of dank rock towered higher yet ; so that they were frightful to look on. Still they rose and rose, until their tops might no longer be discerned ; and darkness fell, a darkness that seemed to wither my soul ! Then he who went before me did turn himself about, and lo ! 'twas Ouvery, the Quartermaster. His face gleamed ghastly white, but his eyes were blacker than the darkness. They seized on mine, and held them—for ever !

I woke gasping and shaking ; and there were two eyes as black as jet fixed on mine ! Ouvery,

the Quartermaster, gazed across at me from the middle of the cabin, where he sat in close converse with my brother.

He got up from his chair ; and, making a sign that I was awake, immediately went out. Here-upon my brother rose also, and stepped to my hammock.

"Well, my heart," said he, "hast been a-voyaging to Tophet, or is't the ghosts from the Haunted Island ? Bless us ! you screeched like a stuck pig."

"Scoff away ! Scoff away !" cried I. "'Twill be another tale to-morrow !"

"Ay !" said he, but I thought his countenance fallen, "pieces-of-eight, and golden bars, and jewels—jewels by the shipload—that'll be the tale to-morrow !"

"And a hempen cord about your neck, and iron chains to hang in, and yokel faces a-gape at you !"

On that he flamed out in a fury, snapping his fingers, swearing and cursing. But I let him rave, answering nothing, and soon he fell quiet, and throwing himself into a chair, sat still, seeming to brood in his mind.

CHAPTER III.

THE CASTAWAYS.

AFTER these events, there fell out nothing worth remark in many days.

We had favourable winds and calm seas, and met with no King's ships. What other craft we met withal, meddled not with us, nor we with them. Through great part of the Bay of Biscay we steered our course close under the coast of France, until we came to an anchor in a small bay thereby, to take in water and fresh provisions ; thence we sailed away, standing to the open sea. We passed the Cape of Finisterre ; and so onwards towards the Tropic of Cancer and the Line.

I come to a day in the fifth week of our voyage. I got up betimes, and went on deck. The ship went merrily along. There was not a sail in sight, nor any glimpse of land ; but from horizon to horizon spread the dancing, shining sea, and I thought it was a gracious scene, like a world from the hands of God.

As I looked, I spied a dark blur of a thing far out upon the waters. It disappeared, but soon hove in sight again, this time quite clear. In the same moment, the look-out man bawled :

"Boat adrift on the larboard bow."

"Lay to, then, and man the jolly-boat," cried the Captain.

The mariners went eagerly to work, snapping greedily at the exciting chance. The jolly-boat, which was towing astern, was speedily hauled in and manned ; but the coxswain was shoved from his wonted command of her by Ouvery, who put himself into the stern-sheets. I, being full of curiosity, jumped into the boat as they made ready to pull away ; whereupon Ouvery did look upon me balefully, though he spoke no word, and I knew that he hated me from the bottom of his black heart !

"Pull away," said the Quartermaster ; and she began to move apace. I, keeping my eyes fixed upon the boat we steered for, at length descried a huddled heap on board of her, which was presently discovered to be the forms of two men. We drew alongside, and lay board on board together, gazing upon a dismal, dreadful sight.

For there in the boat were two gaunt and wasted forms—yea, the very death's heads did grin in the dwindled faces of those poor castaways.

One was an Indian : a tall, well-knit figure dark copper-coloured ; his face long and hard-favoured ; lank black hair.

The other was an European, and, as it should seem, an Englishman. His yellow beard fell long and untrimmed, and his clothes were mean and old ; yet there was that in his look made

me think he was a gentleman. What, however, was remarkable: on sight of the castaways, Ouvery gave a great start and drew sharply in his breath.

"They be dead men both," said a man, solemnly; "rest to their souls!"

But I had got into the boat; and, taking a mirror that I had about me, I held it in turn to those parted and writhen lips, and lo! it twice became clouded with breath.

"They live! they live!" cried I. But Ouvery said quickly:

"Nay, nay! You know nothing at all. Down, ye meddler, and out of the way!" And to the mariners he said:

"Overboard with them! We'll have no truck with the dead! And keep your tongue quiet," said he, glaring at me, "or you shall sweep with them!"

"I say that they live!" I returned passionately. "Carry them to the ship!"

On that, Ouvery raised his clenched fist to strike me down. "You barking cur," cried he, "do you meddle with my orders? I'll have you clapt in irons! I'll flay you to the bone! I'll——"

"Belike you're captain of the ship," said I, flouting him; "I thought my brother was captain."

Ouvery sat still, all swollen with rage; but hereupon up spoke a seaman, saying stoutly:

"Maybe the boy's in the right. Ho! make way here!" He climbed over into the cock-

boat as he spoke, and soon had confirmed my words.

But Ouvery rose up like one possessed ; and, drawing his knife, he reached forth to have stabbed me. But the boat began to rock nigh foundering ; and, losing his footing, he fell, knocking his head against an oar that was out-board, and slid over into the sea. They fished him out ere he sank, and flung him like a log in the bottom of the boat, where he lay stunned.

Hereupon, having made the cock-boat fast to our stern, we returned to the ship. My brother stood at the gang-way, awaiting us ; I acquainted him with what had befallen, demanding that Ouvery should be restrained. But he regarded me not at all.

They contrived a bed for the Indian in the forecastle, but the other was installed in the master's cabin beneath the poop, where I slept, some bedding being laid for me on the floor. Tended by Surgeon Burke, and cared for by the mariners, the Indian made a quick recovery ; but the other lay as one dead, being fallen into a sort of coma or trance.

The Indian came out of his swoon about sundown. Dick, Burke, and I stood beside his bed, when the poor man, on a sudden, stirred and opened his eyes. He looked from one to another of us wildly ; and moved his lips as if he would speak. At this juncture, heavy and uncertain footfalls were heard without, and Ouvery came lumbering in, his face mottled red and purple. He approached ; but, on sight of

him, the Indian stared aghast, stretched forth an arm with a fierce, frenzied gesture, uttered a cry, and sank back beside his senses.

"Why, he knoweth him!" cried I. "He hath seen you before, Ouvery! If he could speak, I warrant you'd stand proclaimed a black villain!"

I was out of myself with passion, and I knew not what I said. But the Quartermaster was transported with fury, and, rasping out horrid oaths, he drew a pistol from his belt and let fly at me. The ball missed my head by a hair's breadth, and was buried in the wooden wall. Ouvery made a dash towards me, reeled, and lurched forward upon the floor. There he lay stunned, having knocked his head against the table-leg.

The episode had passed in a moment, and Dick and the surgeon stood like men dumb-founded. Burke recovered himself:

"You've had a narrow squeak, my lad," said he. "The man's a maniac—look you, Captain!"

But Dick dashed his fist against the wall for mad.

CHAPTER IV.

VILLAINY.

I WENT on deck, to behold a night of calm and beauty. There was no moon ; but the hosts of the stars burned in a clear element, upon a solemn ground, and I thought they were like gems in the mantle of God.

But, as I stood, leaning on the bulwarks, dreaming in the blue starlight, on a sudden a hand was laid on my shoulder, and a hearty voice cried :

“Wake up, young star-gazer ! What are you dreaming of now ? Wouldst know :

What worlds or what vast regions hold
The immortal mind that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshy nook ? ”

“What, old physicker ! ” (for 'twas Surgeon Burke), ““Throw physic to the dogs, I'll none of it ! ’ ”

He laughed boisterously at the return ; then bade me follow him below, saying that the English castaway was coming out of his swoon. We went quickly to the master's cabin, where the Englishman lay stretched upon a day-bed or settee. But, instead of the stark and deadly look he had before, his breast heaved to a

gentle respiration, his eyes were closed, and there was even a trace of colour in his hollow cheeks.

"When he wakes," said Burke, "he'll be recovered, and that will be no great while either."

But in this point he was out ; for the exhausted man continued in his babe-like sleep. At last, being perfectly tired out, I cast myself down upon the bedding on the floor, and took up my repose. Yet I could not presently sleep ; for my thoughts were tumultuous and uneasy to the last degree, running continually upon those strange happenings—more especially upon the desire manifested by Ouvery to make away with the castaways and strange recognition of him by the Mosquito Indian. However, at last I slept.

It must have been upon the stroke of midnight that I woke up suddenly from an unquiet sleep, to hear the sound of stealthy footsteps in the gang-way without.

I listened, my heart beginning to thump upon my sides, my eyes upon the door. The handle turned slowly ; the door was softly opened. Then, half-closing my eyes, I feigned slumber, as, vivid in moonshine cast through the port, the face of Ouvery appeared in the chink.

The Quartermaster stood peering and listening. He entered, and advanced on me ; and there was a knife in his hand. Yet I continued to feign slumber, and, though near dead with terror, to make my breathing appear regular and slow.

At last he was at my side. I opened my eyes

then, ready to evade a deadly thrust, and lo! the man was passed by me and moving towards the Englishman on the bed. On that my nerve came back to me; the spell was broken.

I made one leap of it half across the cabin floor; and, as the Quartermaster, his face set in savage lines, his arm drawn back to thrust, bent over the slumbering Englishman, quick as light I snatched the pistol from his belt and set it close and firm to his ear.

"Drop your blade," said I, "or I'll fire."

Ouvery was no craven, but, on touch of the iron muzzle, he started and dropped his knife. He held perfectly still, muttering something that I had no care to hear; and I bawled loud and repeatedly, "Help! Help!"

It was then that the Englishman came out of his swoon; and, rising up in his bed, "Where am I?" cried he. "What is this?"

"You are on the ship *Tiger*," replied I. "You were taken up from a driving boat—you with an Indian, who also is on the ship."

"Ha! And this fellow?"

"He is the Quartermaster. He was about to murder you; I know not why."

"O-ho!" cried he, "a mystery! I am even eager to fathom it. Turn hither, fellow, that I may look upon the majesty of your countenance. Turn hither, I say!"

But Ouvery, on a sudden, ducked his head; and, with incredible swiftness, whipped from the cabin, and was gone. Yet the other had got view of his face, and he cried:

"The pirate! 'Tis the pirate, by the Lord Harry!

"So I am fallen among thieves and murderers!" says he, turning to me with fine disdain. "Well, 'tis not the first time. You're out on the account—heh?"

I was taken aback at this, and knew not what to answer. Yet something in his countenance told me he was a man I might trust. I resolved to tell him distinctly how it was with us; and, as briefly as possible, I did so.

He heard me out in silence, his keen eyes searching me.

"Why, here is a lad of mettle," says he, "and—what should ever accompany this quality—of integrity. I thank you for your confidence reposed in me; it shall not miscarry. And now" (as I stood abashed by his courtly phrase) "and now for action!"

But, with the word, there came the tramp of men approaching, and the boatswain entered, having a lantern in one hand and a bare cutlash in the other; and close at his heels came my brother.

The boatswain stood still at the entry; but Dick thrust by him, and came forth into the cabin, asking what the matter was.

I left it to the Englishman to answer, and he did so.

"Look you, sir," said he, rising on an elbow and speaking with hauteur, "I am, I suppose, beholden to you for my life. But to save a man from the sea, that he may be barbarously murdered in his bed—where is the obligation?"

“What means he?” asked Dick, turning to me.

I told him what had passed.

“Ouvery! Always Ouvery!” cried he.

“What means the fellow? I begin to sicken of it! Curses on it!”

And, snapping his fingers in a passion, he rushed from the cabin.

The boatswain followed him out, muttering in his beard.

CHAPTER V.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S RELATION
(THE ISLAND).

"CLOSE and bolt the door," said the Englishman so soon as we were alone. "That Quartermaster, saintly soul, may be hereabout. So. And now, my lad, get you into your hammock again, and to sleep."

But sleep was gone from me, and, when I had told him so, he proffered to relate his experiences to me, to pass the vigil. "And certainly," added he, "they are sufficiently strange."

You may be sure I was nothing loth ; and, when I had put on some clothes, and brought a chair to his bedside and seated myself, he thus began :

"'Twas some two years ago, lad, that I had occasion to ship as passenger on a ship bound for Fort St. George.* We left the Downs with fair wind and weather, which continued with us till we were come into the Indian Ocean. But then arose a huge hurricane of wind, which blew us from our course. It held six days, and left us somewhere near the Island of Sumatra. Yet the

* Madras.

ship remained whole ; and we steered north to recover our course, with but a fret of wind. We scarce had got into a sailing posture, but we saw a ship, which came towards us. And, wanting something—I forget what it was—we made a wiff to her. But we got more than we wanted ! For, clapping on a wind, and coming on, they began to fire at us as hot as they could, and brought our mainmast by the board.

“ Well, they boarded us—as villainous a crew as ever sailed the sea ; and, though we made a good fight, ’twas all one : our ship was taken. We expected to be all murdered, or at least set ashore to starve on some desolate island.” *(Here I saw the door handle turn slowly and softly round, but forbore to tell the Englishman, lest he should break off in his relation.)* “ Yet we were reserved alive, to what strange, surprising experiences I’ll tell you.

“ They set many of us down upon the ballast, of whom I was one. Penned together like cattle in that darksome and stinking place, we scarce could stir hand or foot, scarce draw breath. We knew not the day from the night. Our victuals, thrown to us as to dogs, scarce were fit for dogs. The place was full of vermin ; and there were great rats. Their eyes gleamed in the darkness like points of fire ; and, ever and again, as at a signal, the creatures came swarming down upon us.

“ How long this lasted I know not. Certainly many days. All fell sick, some raved with the calenture, three died. But on a blessed morn, at daybreak, they dragged us up out of the pit

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to the deck. Imagine what it meant to us! You cannot—as you cannot possibly imagine that dreadful prison. And no man apprizes at their worth light and air and health and freedom, look you, until he lose them.

“Indeed the suddenness of the change was more than we could bear—so that three of our company fell down in a swoon. ’Twas strange to see, I doubt not—ay, and pitiful! But no breath of pity moved the villainous hearts. They threw all the swooning men into the sea.

“I looked around. The pirate was come to port. On one side of her lay our ship, on the other, land.

“This land was really an island, though we lay too close to perceive it. We beheld very high cliffs towering to a prodigious height above us, streaked with shining green, creeping plants, and wreathed with vines. As I looked on them, a sort of horror seized on me, a phantom foreboding . . . ”

He paused, and lay back in his bed with closed eyes; but soon continued, saying:

“Now the pinnacle of the pirate lay alongside, and the residue of our party was bidden to get into her. Nay, we were driven into the boat! For they did press upon us, punching and thrusting us in the back. As villainous a crew as ever man set eyes on! Hideous visages, blackened with sin, scarred, mutilated with old wounds. And they were dressed and tricked out, these pirates, as from the wardrobe of the

world ; as though it had been opened unto them, and they had taken, every man, whatsoever he listed. For one had a pair of taffety breeches, a lady's cape, and the turban of an Arab ; another the staid habit of a dignitary of Holy Church cloaked about with the robes of a Chinaman ; a leering negro strutted in the finery of a courtier of the king.

" Well, a number of 'em came down into the boat with us, and a big man took command. He is your Quartermaster ! "

" Ouvery ! " exclaimed I. " Was he the captain of the pirate ? "

" No, " said he, " he was the quartermaster, having the second place on the ship. Well, Ouvery—or ' Blazing Sue, ' as they called him—having seated himself in the stern, ordered us to take the oars and pull to the shore. On one of us pleading weakness, he burst forth into foul oaths, adding :

" ' You shall row, though you split ! ' "

" Then, rising in a frenzy, he snatched up a musket by the barrel, felled the poor man, and, seizing hold on the collar of his coat, slung him over into the sea ; and a huge shark immediately swam up and griped him.

" For a space Ouvery sat growling and snapping with his teeth like a dog, whilst the other pirates jested among themselves ; then he gave the order, ' Pull away. ' "

" We laboured at the rowing as best we might, the rogues lolling at their ease. Only, when the pinnace was got three parts in, they double-

banked the oars to speed her through the shore-breakers.

"Having landed, our party was ordered in single file, and so marched up the beach. Some six or seven pirates went on either side, bearing pistols ; while Ouvery took the lead.

"We crossed the beach of white sand. It cast a blinding glare (the sun now being high) ; so that we were glad to come presently into a belt of cocoa trees, the porch of a dense wood. We passed within this wood, following a secret path.

"We had penetrated, it might be, a quarter of a mile, when there was made to us an intimation. In our path, and shining beneath a rift in the overgrowth, we spied something round and white, like a great chalk stone. We came up to it. 'Twas a human skull. It grimaced in the sun with its glistering laughter.

"But Ouvery, turning about, laughed aloud, 'Ho! ho! my boys!' cried he, 'See how he grins! So shall ye grin anon!'

"He stepped to the death's head ; and, bowing with vilest mockery, 'What cheer, comrade?' said he, 'and have they forgotten ye? Come, hist along to Heaven!'

"And, drawing back his great foot, he sent the death crashing into the overgrowth.

"We went a little farther, and came, as it should seem, to an impenetrable dense thicket that was faced with flowering creepers. Ouvery hereupon called a halt ; and, stepping to the thicket, he thrust his hand within, and felt about amongst the stems and leaves. Next moment, that which

we had taken to be a thicket shook and was broken, and a slab of iron swung forward on hinges, leaving in the midst an orifice as black as night.

“ Amazed at the sight, and fearing we knew not what, we continued to gaze.

“ My lad, as we thus stood, there befell a thing that lifted the hair on my scalp !

CHAPTER VI.

THE ENGLISHMAN'S RELATION CONTINUED
(THE CELL).

"'TWAS a sound, a voice—but whether of man, or beast, or worse, we knew not ; and it proceeded from the chasm ; a sudden, loud, weird, shrieking sound that rose and scattered until the very wood seemed full of it, and died gradually away.

"Suddenly there leaped forth a figure. From the darkness of the cavity it came, and stood confronting us. 'Twas the figure of a little lad !

"But he was gaunt as a skeleton ; and the great seaman's watch-coat that he wore, hung about him like a sack, falling almost to the ground. His legs, appearing like sticks beneath the loosely fastened coat, were bare ; and so, also, were his feet. But strangest of all in the look of the lad, was his face.

"'Twere impossible to describe it. Blithe, it was miserable ; majestic, it was menial ; wise, it was wild and witless as the face of an antic ; haggard and deadly pale, the eyes roving continually, shining with a spectral light. The face of a little child. And yet, I tell you, it gave me a scare.

"The little lad stood looking upon us ; then, lifting his hand with a strange eerie gesture, he cried :

" 'Welcome, ye pilgrims ! Lo ! lo ! the Promised Land ! Milk and honey ! a land flowing with milk and honey ! Eat of it ! drink ! sing !—sing for joy of it ! The sun ! the sun ! see, 'tis red, red as the Red Sea ! Aha, Pharaoh ! Where is Pharaoh now ? He strives to follow thee, O sun ! Down ! down ! there's sea enough.'

"So he raved in his frenzy, the crazy lad ; but Ouvery, lumbering forward with a curse, took him with his clenched fist a great buffet on the head, so that he fell down like one dead. And Ouvery laughed, laughed ! But not for long !

"A man burst forth from the thicket behind, and felled the great pirate as if he were a figure of pasteboard !

" 'Twas an Indian—that same Mosquito Indian you took up with me from the boat. He consorted with the pirates ; an innocent abetter of their devilish work, a malefactor in whom was no guile. For the Mosquito Indians do love and revere the English wheresoever they meet with them, honest mariners or pirates, making no discrimination ; and are, for their part, much esteemed by them for their valour, their sagacity, their dexterity in striking fish, and the like.

"So they look upon our countrymen as lords and masters, and do their bidding with the simple faith of children . . . Brave, honest, kindly

souls ! who knows not what eminent service they have done us in our conflict with that Spanish tyrant ? *

"This Mosquito Indian loved the lad, whom he took for dead ; and, crying aloud with a bitter cry, he cast himself upon the ground at his side, fawning upon him as a dog fawns upon the body of its master. But, on a sudden, he gave another cry. He perceived that the lad lived ; and, getting swiftly to his feet, he caught him up, and sped off with him into the wood.

"Ouvery lay as one dead. They plied him with rum, forcing his teeth asunder to get the liquor down ; they bathed his hands and brow with water fetched from a crystal spring. But 'twas all one : he gave no sign.

" ' Blazing Sue's gone ! ' said a pirate.

"But he did mistake. For, filling his mouth with water from the spring, another of the pirates began to blow it in a fine spray in Ouver's eyes and ears ('Tis a thing that revives even dying men) ; and he began to recover his senses, and presently staggered to his feet. When he recalled what had befallen him, his rage was great. Yet he kept it under ; only he cast a baleful look upon us, as he pointed to the opening in the thicket and cried :

" ' Forward into the Promised Land ! ' "

"You may be sure, my lad, that no man was

* How the Englishman would have grieved if he had known that the Mosquito Indians, faithful to the last, would be betrayed, to their fate, by the English Government into the hands of the Spaniards : in 1787.

very eager to obey the command. The chasm had a fearsome look. Whither did it lead ?

"The terror of the unknown lay heavy on us. Yet in our reluctance and fear was an itch of curiosity ; and, though an opportunity of escape and freedom had proffered then, I, at least, would not have taken it ! Moreover the pistols of the guards constrained us ; so we entered the chasm and advanced in the darkness.

"We went on through a passage, as it should seem, hewed out of rock. Soon the darkness became less ; and soon, in a strange, livid, ghost light, we could descry the walls and roof. The passage was excavated in the rock.

"Now the strange illumination became exceeding bright ; a cold, sepulchral, white light, such as I had never known before. Nor was there any lamp, or flame of fire, to acquaint us whence it came.

"There was no door visible, yet there was a door—indeed, many doors—very cunningly concealed in the wall ; and now it opened with a clang of iron. Oüvery immediately commanded us to stand ; and, bidding me, who was among the foremost, to follow him, he betook himself within. Obeying, I found myself in the strangest place I had ever known." (*Here there came a sound of tramping overhead, as if the men had been called to quarters. The Englishman took due notice, but did not break off in his relation.*)

"It was a little cell, like the passage, hewed out of the rock, and about the size of a ship's

round-house. There was no furniture in it, save a table and a chair. Upon the table was a medley of things : scrolls of parchment scrawled over with hieroglyphics, triangles, and the like ; books, pamphlets, maps, draughts, compasses, and I know not what besides. Beneath the table, in nooks and recesses contrived in the walls, were all manner of jars and phials, holding divers materials, both liquid and solid. Also globes, retorts, crucibles, alembics, mortars. At the farther end, beneath a brass clock, stood a large furnace.

“ ’Twas the chamber of a scholar, the cell of an alchemist ; and in a great armchair at the table sat the man himself.

“ He was a very ancient man, long and large of frame, but bowed and lean. He was dressed in a scarlet robe like a cardinal’s. His face, which was shaven bare, was fierce and forbidding, and heavy and ill-shapen in the lower parts ; but his forehead was high and deep, and his hair fell in long venerable locks, white like snow. His eyes were large, but deep-sunk and dull. Yet, as I was soon to see, they could kindle in anger terribly, or become sharp and piercing like points of steel. And in the whole port and aspect of the man there was power ; while thought brooded continually in the majestic wrinkles of his brow.

“ He spoke at once, turning to Ouvery and clutching the sleeve of the man’s coat ; and his voice was small and shrill like a woman’s.

" 'So,' said he, 'they are come, the pilgrim band, the little pilgrim band. You have brought them to labour with us in the vineyard—is't not so, comrade? Thereafter they will join. 'Tis well. 'Tis very well. And my acid? You have brought my acid?'

" But at the words, I saw Ouvery start and turn deadly pale; and in a quavering voice he said:

" 'Doctor, forgive! I have forgot!'

" The hand that toyed with Ouvery's sleeve closed on it like a vice; a spasm shook the ancient man, and left him rigid; the veins stood upon his forehead gathered in knots; his eyes started in their sockets.

" For many moments he looked on the man balefully, like a serpent. Then, uttering a frightful cry, he snatched up a globe of glass and cast it full at Ouvery's head!

" It took him upon the forehead; and well was it for him that the glass was but thin, breaking to small pieces. Even so, you could see that the man was sorely hurt. But he gave no sign of pain, and I thought that the anger of the Doctor was more fearful to him than any pain, or rather, that it kept him from feeling pain at all. Only he kept repeating:

" '*Doctor, forgive! Doctor, forgive!*'

" 'Forgive you, you dog!' cried the ancient man. 'Where is my acid? The jars are empty! Empty! empty! empty! empty!' He sank back in his chair, gasping, great beads upon his brow; and Ouvery would have seized the occasion to flee. He leapt to the door.

"But no farther! for the Doctor looked on him. 'What!' cried he, his rasping voice coming in gasps, 'would you . . . would you give me the slip?' And then, in a horrid coaxing tone, he added:

"'Would you leave me, my child, whom I have loved? Would you leave me, after so long a severance? Yet who am I that I should hinder ye, or deny your smallest desire? Get you gone, child of my heart, get you gone—into the *morass*!'

"'Mercy!' cried Ouvery; 'not there! Nay, not there!'

"The Doctor pointed to the door.

"Ouvery sank down upon the floor huddled in fear; and, villain though he was, I could not but have compassion for him then. But the Doctor only laughed, and he touched a little knob of brass that stood on the wall to his hand.

"Presently a young man, having a look of suffering upon his delicately shapen, shaven countenance, and habited in black in the manner of a secretary, came swiftly and softly into the cell, and stood before the Doctor, bowing almost to the ground.

"'Ambrose, summon Sebastian, and . . .'

"He broke off, seemed to consider; and, turning to Ouvery, he asked:

"'And if I bore with you yet again?'

"'Try me, Doctor! Put me to the proof; Only do not . . .'

"'Peace, fool! Ambrose, begone!' (the young man instantly withdrew) 'Ouvery, on

the morrow you shall sail for England—but of that anon. Get you gone, and bring our new-come comrades to the slave Davies, charging him to see to it, that not a jot of care or tendance be omitted unto them. And tell him, moreover, that if the South Bulwark be not finished by the third day following, he shall pass through that door which I with all my knowledge and wit never have been able to unlock !’

“But Ouvery stood gazing on him after a vacant manner ; and, rising from his chair in fury, the Doctor cried :

“ ‘ Clod of earth, lacking understanding!—ah ! take your cow’s eyes from me ! Ambrose !’

“He touched the knob again, and, when the young man returned, ‘Expound to this clodpole,’ said the Doctor, ‘my saying, *the door that hath no key !*’

“Thereupon Ambrose turned to Ouvery ; and, like one reciting a task, he said :

“ ‘ No man is able to open it, but the dead pass through there. ’Tis the door of fate.’

“ ‘ Good words, Ambrose,’ said the Doctor. ‘ No man, indeed, is able to open that door. I myself have essayed, even to weariness, but I found no key.

“ ‘ The secrets of the earth lie open to me ; but the invisible——Ha ! I saw a goodly vine ; I ate of the fruit of it—knowledge, domination, gold—and it hath turned to ashes in my mouth ! My heart was empty, and I sought to satisfy it—with hate ; and the void is but increased !

“‘What, then, is hate? Is’t a mere nullity? the walling-in of the soul?

“‘Behold, now, this cell, a place walled off; I banish the light of it. So.’ (He touched a knob upon the wall, and instantly there was thick darkness.)

“‘Without is light—light of the sun; but not a ray thereof can enter here. No; but, if it be dark without, and I throw up walls, and roof them about, and stop up every nook and cranny, can I keep out the darkness, as now I do the light? No; for darkness is nothing. It cannot be shut out: only I make it to vanish with light. So.’ (And, on a sudden, the cell was flooded with bright light.)

“‘And as with light and darkness, is’t not so, also, with good and evil, love and hate? Ha! I see it! I see it! I know thy efficacy, Almighty Good! thou only real power, substance, and principle, *Spirit*, the One Spirit! With my intellect, in which the truth is dawning, I see it. . . But thou comest not into this heart——’”

At this juncture, the Englishman’s relation was interrupted; a great gun was shot off on the poop overhead; and, while the ship yet shook with the reverberation, there came a great shout of cheering thrice repeated.

I sprang to my feet, and, on a nod from the Englishman, went from the cabin to find out what this might mean.

CHAPTER VII.

A HORRIBLE VILLAIN.

I STAYED not long in doubt. The steel-grey light of dawn shone upon the sea ; and there, within half a mile astern of us, was a great ship flying the flag of St. George.

She was out after us ; a consort belike of the vessel we had crippled in our scampering away. A very swift sailer she must have been, considering the speedy sailing we had made all along. But there was small gratulation on that score for the King's ship now. For her foremast had gone by the board, shot away by our stern-chasers ; and, having slewed right round, she lay wallowing in the troughs of the sea.

I climbed the poop-ladder, and stepped to the place where my brother stood with the gunners patting caressingly the nozzle of the piece that had served his turn so bravely. Wallis, the master-gunner, stood looking earnestly to leeward, where a wall of mist held down upon the sea. He spoke a word to my brother and pointed that way. Dick had a spyglass in his hand, and immediately he set it to his eye, bringing it to bear. As I drew near, I heard him say he descried seven great ships which stood close-hauled towards us. Hereupon he

gave the glass to the master-gunner ; who, having looked awhile, said he took those ships for pirates. " And you'll leave 'em the King's ship to grind their teeth on, Captain," said he, laughing.

But Dick shook his head, " No, no," said he, " that sort of people don't meddle with King's ships. You get no dew of heaven in them. They're going for some Spanish port, to sack a city, belike."

" Well, 'tis a pity," said Wallis. But indignation seized on me, and I said hotly :

" How is't a pity ? Do you wish to see your own people barbarously murdered, you base traitor !"

The man hung his head, grinning sourly, and looking sideways up at my brother ; who told me to be off with my theatricals, as he called it. Whereupon the gunner laughed. I had returned upon him ; but, from the cabin beneath, there came the dull report of a pistol-shot.

I knew what it was. Ouvery had seized on the occasion of my absence to enter the master's cabin, had fired at the poor invalid, and, no doubt, murdered him.

And so it proved ; for, on making haste to the cabin, I saw the Englishman lay dead in his bed, being shot through the skull into the brain. Yea, I did very narrowly escape a like fate myself ; for that enormous and infernal villain, Ouvery, stood crouching in shadow behind the alley-way door, and, as I stepped by him, he let fly at me with a second pistol that he had.

However, I had caught a shuffling motion he made before he fired at me, and, by an instinct, I turned my head in the nick of time. The bullet missed me.

I immediately drew my rapier, and made a pass upon him even as he leaped on me. But he came a little sideways, so that my point took him on the shoulder. He gave a yelping cry, and would have closed with me ; but, quick as a flash, I dropped, casting myself with such force at his booted ankles, which I clutched, as handsomely tripped him, so that he fell all his length forward on the cabin floor. Thereupon, before ever he could recover himself, I sprang on top of him, and held him so that he could not anyways stir or lift himself up. I was mad with passion against this horrible wretch, and if I had had a pistol in my hand, I would have made no more to have set it to his head and murdered him, than to have killed a rat !

Now, the entire affair had passed in the space of a few moments, and the Captain had just entered the cabin. He stepped forward, and, in a voice that trembled, bade me stand up and let the Quartermaster alone. But this was an order I flatly denied to obey.

“Let him alone !” said I. “Why, he hath just endeavoured as much as possibly he could to murder me ; and look you his bloody work there on the bed !”

“Stop your mouth, and get up !” said he.

“I’ll get up,” said I, “if you’ll undertake that he shall immediately hang at the mainmast !”

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"That's my business," said the Captain. "Up with you, or you shall hang there yourself!"

Now, Surgeon Burke was come hither, standing at the entry of the cabin, and it came into my thoughts to appeal from my brother unto him. However, I perceived the foolishness of this. "Well, have it as you will," said I, and got to my feet.

Ouvery lay some moments where he was, gnawing the mat upon the floor with his teeth, and growling like a dog. Thereupon he stirred, slowly turned over on his back, and so lay lumpish and dazed and retching after a disgusting manner. This horrible villain did reek of rum, so that the cabin was full of the stench of it; and, becoming faint, I was fain to get forth to the open air.

As I passed out of the cabin, Surgeon Burke winked his eye to me, and said in my ear:

"Never you mind, my boy! I'll take him in hand. I'll bleed him, to the last drop!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THALASS.

COMING forth upon the poop, I desponded in my mind, thinking of home and England ; and the sea, with all the beauty of its clear and flashing blue waters, was hateful to me ; yea, it cruelly smiled on me with its shining face.

For I suffered loneliness, such loneliness as exiles know ; than which, to sensible men, there is not on the earth a more cruel affliction. Here, indeed, on this populous King's ship, of which my very brother was in command, I did find myself alone with a desolation very far greater than solitude of place. Doubtless there was something of God in the villainous men, deep in the hearts of them, as there is something of God in all things ; and the rest (to speak truly) is but distortion and shadow and absence and darkness. But I did not understand it so, and looked but on the appearance, loathing them for their villainous demeanour, and filthy discourse.

A woful suffering it was ; a stifling of the heart ; a hand upon the brain, goading it to madness ; an upheaval of the deeps, breaking up the standing surface-mould. But, amid the stress of it all, and as with a flash of seismic fire, there was made to me a revelation. *All*

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loneliness and loss were delusions ; for the hearts of all are knit together in the heart of God.

So the affliction departed from me, and I came to myself. Yet it left me sore distraught, so that I shook with cold like one in an ague ; and I made to go to the galley, where was a fire.

I descended the weather-ladder ; but, coming under the break of the poop, I caught a curious sound of singing that proceeded from within the alley-way.

I passed in, and the sound led me towards the master's cabin. Therein I beheld the Mosquito Indian. He was alone with the dead Englishman, pacing up and down before the body ; and, ever as he went, he kept crooning and chanting a wild music, and swayed his body from side to side, and moved his hands and arms in strange mystic passes and convolutions.

Wild and inarticulate was the dirge, and the motions, I doubt not, were but the ceremonies of a savage fetish ; but I watched and hearkened entranced. How much of what followed is accountable to the woful strain that recent trials—and especially that last great trial—had put upon me, I know not ; but I think that there was nothing earthly in that chant, or rune (whatever it was), nothing of human artifice, and that it proceeded from the occult heart of things.

I saw a vision of a boundless expanse : the heavens loaden with masses of cloud ebon black, the firmament illumined with a spectral light, and, beneath it all, the *deep* ! That was black as the clouds above, and surging in billows

(though without foam) so stupendous, that the tops of them might not be descried, and sweeping together with a shock and tumult such as no man could imagine. But that which held my gaze—yea, and nigh unseated my reason!—was the Thing, whether brute or demon, that seemed to be the sole denizen of the waters, swimming and wallowing there. Merciful God! may I never look upon the like of it again.

Slowly the mood and measure of the singing changed; and now I beheld other scenes, and other images, which concerned the mid-period of things.

Again the measure changed; and, now, indeed, I saw god-like forms and god-like deeds: and there appeared before me (but oh, how transfigured, how glorified!) the similitudes of those whom I had known and loved: my mother, who was dead, my friends and playmates as a child, and my father, the Squire. They smiled on me; and so near they seemed, that I stretched forth my hand to have touched them, and would have spoken to them, when lo! they were gone. The Mosquito Indian had ceased from his singing, and stood silent and motionless, with bowed head.

I sprang to my feet. "Now, what manner of man are you?" cried I. "What was it that you sang?"

But he turned, and looked on me so friendly, and yet withal so manly, grave and majestic, that I was drawn to him. He saluted me; solemnly we shook hands, in testimony of friend-

ship, a friendship that endured to the end—yea, to the end!

The Mosquito Indian was sufficiently acquainted with the English tongue, though he did patter it but queerly. He told me the name he went by amongst the English, and was very proud of it, knowing no better. For 'twas but a ridiculous name, given him by some buffoon. So I called him Thalassios (afterwards shortened to Thalass), because it was a high-sounding word to please him, and because he had been taken up from the sea.

Soon after came two seamen to bear away the dead body of the Englishman. I followed them forth to where my brother stood awaiting them under the break of the poop. He immediately bade them to throw the body into the sea.

On this, however, the boatswain, who stood near, putting off his cap to the Captain, begged leave to ask whether he would not give the body a volley for ceremony, or, at any rate, cause it to be sewn up in a sheet or an old topsail, and a weight fastened to it to sink it in the sea. "For," said he, "if you throw him in as he be, I doubt he'll rise and haunt us, Cap'n."

But the Captain, being in a very ill temper, took this in dudgeon, and roughly bid the boatswain to keep his tongue quiet, and the mariners to act their part without more ado. This they did—albeit but unwillingly for what the boatswain had said about the spirit haunting the ship—and, as the body splashed into the sea, they looked one on another very glumly; and,

after the Captain's back was turned, they began to murmur against him, saying he had put a curse upon them, and that henceforward we should meet with no luck in our voyage, and that, in all likelihood, the ship would be quite lost.

Towards evening the wind freshened very much, so that they said evil already began to fall upon us. But, on this coming to my brother's ears, he went and spoke to them, and appeased their minds ; for he showed them that the wind was favourable to our course, and that it did but speed them the faster to the island whither they were bound and where they would all make their fortunes.

When dark came, we had a great rippling sea, and a high wind, which sometimes came in pushes, forcing us to hand our topsails often. It increased to a gale, and came so furious at last, that we scudded under a mainsail.

This gave the men work enough all night.

CHAPTER IX.

OUVERY DELIVERS UP THE CHART.

ON the next day following, I got up betimes and went on deck.

The ship lurched and pitched so that I had much ado to keep my feet. We ran before the wind under our topsails only, driven ever onwards with the rolling long waves of the sea and the flying white scud-rack overhead. This all-moving prospect put strange thoughts and whimsies in my head, insomuch that I found I could not endure to look upon it for long together, and I presently returned into my cabin, and read in a book until breakfast-time.

I sat down to that meal in sole company of Surgeon Burke (my brother not yet being up); and then I had news of Ouvery.

"'Tis the second time of bleeding the villain," says Burke, "and, if you will pass me the poached eggs, I'll even show you how 'tis done."

"So you have carved him like a poached egg," answered I laughing, as I passed the dish to him. He provided himself with great liberality; and, between munching of the eggs, "Knives for eggs, and lancets for villains," says he, "there be your remedies, look you!"

While he yet spoke, my brother entered, and

asked what he said about remedies. The surgeon, putting on a countenance of the greatest gravity, replied :

"I gave your brother a very good remedy for gout in the great toe. Do you happen to suffer from the gout, Captain?"

But Dick was out of humour for jest. "Tut, tut," said he testily, as he sat down ; and immediately after Ouvery entered the cabin.

I looked at Burke, who made a grimace at me. Ouvery staggered to the table with much ado for the weakness he was under. He was in a most villainous temper, which the sight of me, be sure, did not serve to sweeten ! He sunk heavily into a chair, and began to eat in sullen silence. This wrought on my brother, and he rapped out :

"So you are in the sullens again, my man !"

Ouvery looked up dully and heavily, like a great beast ; then a terrible light came into his eyes, and he bounded to his feet with a roar.

"What !" cried he, "*you* speak to *me*... You ... I" His speech was stopped with passion ; but he caught up a great brass salver and cast it at my brother with all his force. It missed his head, and so narrowly, that the hair was stirred upon his scalp ; and on that, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, both men had drawn their pistols and fired across !

My brother stood untouched ; but the Quarter-master gave a great, snarling, stricken cry ; and, pitching forward upon the board, he lay there silent and still. The ball had pierced his breast

in the upper parts, and he never spoke more. Only he fixed his eyes upon my brother full of hate and of mystery, and he took from the pocket of his coat a leathern case and thrust it forth before us. Then the hand of death closed upon Ouvery ; and, in a throe and convulsion terrible to behold, his spirit passed.

But I took mechanically the leathern case, and opened it. There was a strip of parchment sewn between. 'Twas a seaman's chart.

I turned to my brother, who stood holding the smoking pistol. His face was deadly pale ; and, when I spoke to him, calling him by his name, he laughed high and shrill, like a woman. Here-upon Surgeon Burke gave him to drink a dram of brandy from his flask, which steadied him. When he was recovered, my brother took the chart ; and, having observed it awhile, he returned it to its case, which he put within the pocket of his coat, saying :

" This is what I wanted. 'Tis the chart of the island, Burke. But what made him deliver it to me so ? For revenge ? But how can that be ? "

CHAPTER X.

WE FALL IN WITH THE FLEET OF CAPTAIN
MORGAN. THE BUCCANEER'S HUT.

ABOUT midday the wind shifted into the north ; and, continuing very high, it blew us from our course.

And, as we designed to touch at the Isle of Porto Rico, so we could not make it, but must go away under the great Island of Hispaniola. Hereupon the wind chopped back again, so that we sailed along the south side of the island. Soon after doubling the Cape of Lobos on the south western corner of Hispaniola, we descried at sea a fleet of full fifteen sail, that came towards us.

We misliked the appearance of them, yet held our course—albeit the Captain caused cutlasses and pistols to be served out, and had our ports opened and our guns run out. When we were come to about a quarter of a mile from those ships, the biggest of them fired a gun, and made a wiff to us to stand in the wind, or *lay to*, as mariners call it. This was very uneasy to my brother, and now he was sorry he had not borne up his helm and scampered away while there was yet time. Yea, it put him in so ill a temper,

that I, who stood near him on the quarter-deck, was fain to remove to more peaceful ground. For, after he had ordered to obey the summons, he fell to pacing quickly up and down ; and, as I stood a little in his path (or rather he pretended I did), he shoved me roughly to one side, as well as giving me a whirret on the ear for having, as he said, obstructed him.

The ships came a little nearer, and then brought to. Whereupon a dozen men put themselves into a big canoe, or periagua, which was towing astern of the Admiral, and pulled towards us. They came on but slowly, for the sea was heavy ; but at length they laid aboard of us in the waist. They were all huge brawny seamen, sunburnt like red tiles, and very villainous.

When they had made fast their boat, the coxswain halloed to my brother, and inquired of him whence we came. Being answered, "From England," he said he was come from Captain Morgan, who desired some provisions of bread, pork and cheese ; in recompense whereof he had sent us some jars of excellent Peru wine.

Now, while the man spoke, I observed my brother gave a start and looked earnestly upon him ; and, after he ceased, the Captain desired he would come aboard into the ship, but that the rest should stay in the boat. The rest, however, began to cry out against that.

"What! you won't treat us, Cap'n?" cries one, and "Let us see what liquor you brought from England," cries another, and "Why, you

skinflint shark," quoth another, "if you drink not with us, we'll broach your fat hull!"

Hereupon these unruly rascals made to swarm the ship's side, and what the event of it had been I know not; but, on a sudden, a gun was shot off aboard the Admiral, which put a period to their brawling. They immediately fell quiet; and the coxswain said: "Cap'n Morgan's in haste, and I reckon we'd best be in haste also. Keep you still in the boat, while I go get the victuals. You'll not drink rumbo this bout!"

So he came up to us into the ship; and my brother took him into his cabin, shutting the door after, so that I know not what passed between them.

But when they came out, they talked very familiarly together; and, passing near me, I heard my brother say:

"Is Jolly Peter still with you?" whence I apprehended my brother had old acquaintance with these people. As to what they were, I doubted not, and now do know, they were nothing but a swarm of pirates. On board those fifteen vessels, indeed, was embarked the army of Captain Henry Morgan, a name soon to become so notorious and so dreadful. They were going to Maracaibo.

When such commodities as the pirates wanted had been laded into their boat (the jars of wine having been taken aboard the ship in the interim), that spokesman did very affectionately take leave of my brother, and returned into the

boat. So they cast off and pulled away, singing a ribald song to keep the time.

After parting from the pirates, we hauled our wind and tacked in for the western shore of Hispaniola, to re-victual the ship and fill our water. Thereby, in the dusk of the evening, we hit a little bay, and came to an anchor within a mile from the shore, and lay there all night.

In the morning, so soon as it was light, I got up, and went on deck to view the landfall. Indeed, I was much inquisitive to behold this Island of Hispaniola; for a poor crooked mutilated man that lived in the village at home, had given me an account thereof, acquainting me with its varied fruitfulness and spacious and beautiful prospects, and with the curious customs of the hunters and planters there. He, when a boy, had been kidnapped, and transported into slavery on the plantations in the Isle of St. Christopher of the Caribbee Islands. There his master was one Bettesa, who did even excel in cruelty among a sort of people incredibly cruel to their slaves and servants, and used him with such barbarity as reduced his body to that miserable plight aforesaid. But at last, escaping from the clutches of this inhuman monster, he came to Hispaniola; where, after many days of hiding and wandering up and down the country, he fell in with a certain rich Spaniard, who proved his benefactor. For this generous-spirited man not only clothed and cared for that poor fugitive, but did also defray the charges of his passage to England on a ship

that was departing thither ; and, moreover, he gave him, in Spanish notes, a bounty sufficient to his support for the rest of his days.

Having mounted the poop, I looked very eagerly towards the land.

I beheld a low woody shore, whereon at some points a sort of squat small trees grew quite down to the sea, their branches so low as to touch the water. Hugely contrasting with these, were palm trees, being exceeding tall (160 feet at the least) and wholly destitute of branches to the very tops, where grew prodigious great leaves. The trunks were of a huge thickness and were covered with prickles.

Near the bottom of the bay a river flowed into the sea, on the marshy banks whereof those great trees did chiefly grow. In the background the woods grew very thick and high. I saw therein many brave cedar trees. At the farther extremity of the bay, where the woods were much thinner, there was a clear ground, and in the midst a wooden hut, the roof whereof was covered with the great leaves I have told you of. A smoke went up from a heap near the entry.

Even as I spied this hut, a man stepped forth from within, and was followed by another. On spying the ship, they immediately turned and hid themselves within the woods. They appeared to be white men, very slovenly dressed. I took them for hunters. I observed by the stirring of the undergrowth (albeit 'twas but slight) that they worked their way in the

coverts of the woods amongst the shore towards the ship. Being come over against us, they stood concealed amongst the little thick trees beside the sea ; and there they were, when, on my brother coming to me on the poop, I told him what I had seen.

He immediately ordered the jolly-boat to be launched and manned ; and, this done, he put himself into the boat, and so did I.

We pulled to the shore, making to a point near the place where those two men lurked amongst the trees, and where there was ground fit to light upon. Having jumped ashore, the Captain hallooed to these people, telling them that he came in peace, and would by no means harm them ; only he desired some discourse with them, and to trade with them.

Hereupon one of them made answer, in very poor English, that 'twas well ; they would trade with him, and invited him to come and drink with them in their hut. They desired, however, that he would come alone ; by reason, as they said, their little mean hut was not fit to entertain more. He thanked them, and told them he would go with them.

Then came they out of their hiding towards us into the open. They were a French buccaneer (or hunter of wild bulls and cows), and his slave. They were very slovenly dressed, and beastly dirty. The buccaneer wore a dirty linen shirt tucked into his breeches, which were dyed in the blood of the beasts he killed. He had round his middle a sailor's belt ;

a long sheath-knife hung from the belt at the back thereof: leggings he had of hairy boar-hide, shoes of dressed bull-hide, and a big wide-brimmed hat upon his head. The habit of the slave was likewise; only without belt or shoes, and on his head an old cloth montero-cap. Their faces were anointed with hog's grease to defend them from the stings of insects.

My brother went with them to the hut; and I, with Surgeon Burke, into the woods. For Burke took the opportunity of gathering divers medicinal herbs and woods that the place afforded.

Before he left the seamen, however, he warned them that they should by no means touch the fruit of any tree which was not pecked by birds; for, said he, 'twas an infallible sign that they were not good, and evinced those little squat trees that I had observed from the ship, which had apples on them that did smell very sweet. These were manchineel, or dwarf-apple trees, the fruit whereof no bird doth eat: and, indeed, it is so venomous that the very crabs that eat of it are poisonous. He that eats thereof is presently raving mad, and dead within a little while after. Moreover, the sap of this tree doth raise on the skin terrible red blisters, as it were scalding water.

We roved up and down in the woods, gathering Burke's medicants; but, as the sun climbed, we began to be tormented with those big venomous gnats called mosquitoes, as with other flying and creeping pests also. And,

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though the Surgeon seemed not much to mind them, for me the incessant attacks and inroads of the creatures became well-nigh insupportable ; but I endured them for the sake of the novelty of the way.

Care was ever had of us, as we drew farther from the seaside, not to lose touch of the river, though we saw little of it for the dense undergrowth.

At length the wood became pathless, which forced us to return. A little after, through a rift in the undergrowth towards the river, I spied a marvellous strange thing—or so I thought it. For, as it should seem, a great tree-log that floated in the river, did turn about and raise itself as if it were a living creature. And a living creature it really was, being nothing else but a prodigious great cayman, or crocodile, that, thus in semblance of a floating log, lay lurking for its prey, waiting until some wild boar or other came to drink thereby. This horrible beast could have had no less than threescore foot in length, and ten in breadth.

Another horrid creature I beheld before we returned to the sea-shore. This was a sort of huge hairy spider, very hideous. Its body was as big as an egg ; its legs were like a crab's ; four black teeth it had, with which it snapped at me as it ran scuttling away along a bough of a tree. I must confess it gave me a scare, and the more so because I thought it might be the dreadful tarantula whose bite doth make men mad. But Burke told me it was not venomous, and, moreover, that I needed not be afraid of being

envenomed by anything in that place ; for no creature in the whole Island of Hispaniola was venomous—no, not even snakes.

When we got to the boat, we found my brother was not yet returned, and the seamen much out of humour for the waiting. They sat on the shore, smoking their pipes, cursing the Captain and the mosquitoes, and viciously casting stones at the land crabs.

“I ain’t going for to bide on this hell-shore much longer,” said one, “Cap’n or no Cap’n ! Oh, to hell with them mosquitos !”

But Burke essayed to turn their minds, and “Why, what’s amiss with ’em ?” says he merrily, “They need their victuals, like the rest of us. I’ve been feeding a score of ’em since I came ashore.”

“Well, you may say so, too !” returned the seaman. “You have enough and to spare on your bones, old sawbones !”

Burke laughed, and slapped him on the shoulder. With such jolly talk did he physic their minds, and had soon restored them to good health. But, on a sudden, came a sound of another sort of jollity : drunken shout and revelry in the buccaneer’s hut ; and, as he hearkened, I saw the merriment quite go out of Burke : while one of the seamen said harshly :

“Hark to ’em, boys, roystering yonder ! lying snug an’ easy on their liquor, like fine gentlemen, whilst we be sweltering here !”

So the ill-temper of the seamen returned, nor was Surgeon Burke able to mollify them.

And now the sun began to shine very hot, and the hunger and thirst of the mosquitoes appeared even to increase. After a further spell of waiting (the clamour in the hut continuing), those belated and miserable seamen did conclude that they had endured enough, and would have put themselves into the boat and launched forth for the ship.

However, Burke proffered to go to the hut and bring them word again, and persuaded them to wait his return. So he went, and I with him.

We forced our way in haste amongst the woody shore, whilst behind us the curses of the seamen, in front the shouts and laughter of the revellers, sounded in our ears ; whilst the sun scorched us like a furnace, and the humming mosquitoes stung our bare faces. Many discomforts and hardships of body I have suffered, but never a one of them comparable to that shore-passage at Hispaniola !

At last we came to the hut, and straightway entered in. The drinkers sat on a couple of chests and a stool, which were disposed about a table on which were canakins and an earthen jar, or bottle.

They had their load : the buccaneer and his slave looked blankly up at us as we entered, and the buccaneer broke off in singing a drunken song ; but my brother stirred not hand or foot. He sat fallen forward upon the board, being completely conquered with the drink. 'Twas veycou, as they call it, the beer of the buccaneers. (It is made from Cassava root,

from which, also, they make their meal or flour.)

Surgeon Burke worked his way round the cabin towards my brother, and, taking him smartly by the shoulder, endeavoured to rouse him up ; but he could not.

Meanwhile the buccaneer began to be contrary and truculent, and tipsily abused us in the French tongue. But we minded him not, so long as he contented himself with words. When, however, he pulled out a pistol and began to threaten us with it, Burke leant swiftly over and snatched it from him. On that, the buccaneer rose up to have grappled with him, but Burke poked him smartly in the wind, which doubled him up ; and he rolled over upon the floor, and lay there muttering, swearing, and singing this catch :

Lolonois ! Lolonois !
On doit suivre Lolonois !
Un si brave Capitaine !

As for the slave, he meddled not with us, but sat still, drinking down a last panakin of the veycou ; whereupon he settled also, and presently slept.

They being all three thus disposed and settled on their lees, as the saying is, Surgeon Burke desired me to return alone to the mariners, and to bid them launch forth and bring the boat towards a little landing-place which was over against the hut.

Before I went, he anointed my face and hands with hog's grease (a vessel whereof he

found in a corner), to solace my mosquito bites, which now began to be very grievous to me.

So I went. When I came to the seamen, I found that they had been joined by several others, who had come ashore in the launch, or longboat, and Thalass, the Mosquito Indian, with them. This was told me by two of them who stood by the boats, and that the rest were gone away straggling into the woods to shoot wild fowl, some of those who had come in the longboat having muskets.

This put me to my trumps for men to manage the boat, and I started off to see for them. Suddenly a musket-shot rang out in the woods, and was succeeded by a great hoarse croaking of crows, or ravens, that rose flocking above the tree-tops in a black multitude; and then, on a sudden, arose a great outcry of men.

I set off running that way, and soon perceived what the matter was. Two of the seamen were locked in fierce fight. Now, this was a dreadful thing to see; for one of the fighters was a one-armed man—I mean, his left arm had been amputated below the elbow, and, in lieu of an arm, he had an iron rod with a hook to it. With this hook had he grappled hold of the other, and with his sailor's knife he made fierce clawing cuts at his face. The rest stood by, viewing the fight.

However, all was over in a moment, the one-armed man having murdered the other. When I came up, he was rummaging in the pockets of the dead man's coat. He seemed to have a

huge impatience about something he sought after, digging amongst the cloth stuff, his face red like fire.

At last he grimped out a flask of water, which immediately he uncorked, and drank off the contents.

The man was stark mad. Being one of those who had come ashore in the second boat, he had neither heard the Surgeon's warning against eating of the fruit of the manchineel, nor knew anything at all of the danger; and, being attracted, I suppose, by the pleasant appearance and sweet smell of those deadly apples, he had tasted and eaten of them. Whereupon such huge drought and uncontrollable thirst seized on the poor maddened wretch, as inflamed him to that dreadful act of ferocity I have told you of. Now madness seized hold on him indeed, insomuch that he ran up and down, roaring and cutting the air and the trees with his knife. But the boatswain, who stood by, quickly put a period to his misery by running him through with his hanger.

After this I told the boatswain what Burke desired, and he mustered half a dozen of that company, and brought them with me to the boats. We put ourselves into the longboat, launched forth, and pulled towards the farther point of the bay, where we found Burke without the hut, stirring the heap of tobacco-leaves that was laid up before the entry for a protection against the mosquitoes. We went ashore to him, and with him into the hut.

The jolly company lay in the same posture, all three slumbering. Burke bid our men to remove the Captain into the boat, and they began to set about it. But, while this was doing, the buccaneer stirred, and presently woke up; and, having looked stupidly round, he enquired who we were and what we did in his habitation.

He was answered pleasantly by Burke, who said :

“Bon jour, monsieur, j'espère que vous avez bien dormi. Il faut que nous vous quittions. Mais je suis vraiment très fâché de ne plus voir votre beau visage !”

But this was taken very ill by the buccaneer, who started up, crying :

“Insolent ! maraud d'Anglais ! petit gros homme ! Mort Dieu ! vous me le paierez.”

And he felt for his knife.

The Surgeon, however, had removed it whilst he slept ; and, when he understood this, he would have fallen upon Burke with his fist. But one of the seamen who stood near, knocked him on the head with the butt of his pistol, which felled him senseless.

Hereupon, waked by the scuffle, the slave began to cry out, and then roared for quarter, as a seaman lifted his pistol to have served him after the same manner as his master. But Burke made the man desist.

Burke's care now was to get the Captain (who continued to slumber) into the boat, and thence all back into the ship again ; and this he did effect, mainly by reason of his foresight in

absconding amongst the bushes the buccaneer's store of veycou before our men came to the hut.

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That night I took an opportunity of questioning Thalass about his knowledge of the Haunted Island and acquaintance with those pirates. But, though he answered me very frankly and told me what possibly he could, I learnt not much ; for the eyes of a poor Indian are not as an European's, and here were strange and unfamiliar things.

It appeared, also, that Thalass had never stayed on the island for any considerable space of time, but used to go out on one pirate vessel or another (for, it seems, there were two or three), and, even at such times as he was on the island, he kept himself aloof from the rest, living in the woods.

Thalass told, indeed, of great pieces of ordnance and fortifications ; and of that subterraneous place spoken of by the Englishman. Of the terrible old man the Englishman had called the Doctor, he could tell me nothing but what I knew. He had heard of the ghost, but had never seen it.

For the rest, he had consorted with the Englishman and made great friends with him ; and at last (being taken out together on the same ship), they had contrived to escape in the cock-boat, and (after many days, and when such provisions as they had were long spent) had fallen in with our ship in manner related.

I asked him how first he came to consort with those pirates ; he answered, that, being " many sleeps ago at Quibo," there came one of their ships, and he had gone away with them.

Next day I gave the Captain and Surgeon Burke an account of all that I had learnt of the Haunted Island, as well from the Englishman as from the Mosquito Indian.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAD MAROON.

IN all the space of our voyage from the Island of Hispaniola, round about the great hump of America southwards, and through the Straits of Magellan into the South Sea, there fell out nothing worthy of remark—nothing, I mean, sufficiently noteworthy or fit to be set down in this history.

Accordingly, passing over all this while, I come to the day, when, having beat up round the Cape, at nine leagues' distance we laid the Isle of Juan Fernandez.

This island is very high, and at a distance appears like a rough rocky pyramid cut off at the top with a canopy of clouds. But when we were got closer to the south side, we perceived the shore was woody. We had a constant breeze ; and, about sundown, stood in past a lesser island (being nothing but scraggy and barren rock), into a bay, and came to an anchor at the distance of a furlong from shore.

Thus we had lain not long, when we perceived a man made signals to us from the shore, hallooing and waving a sort of a ragged banner on a staff. He appeared to be a wild figure of a man, but the light was failing, and whether

European or Indian we could not tell. And, as to what he said, a very great concourse of seals on the shore did keep up so great a barking noise that we could make nothing of it.

I asked the Captain whether he would send off a boat, but he told me "No, not until the morning," and immediately commanded, that on no pretext, should any man leave the ship. Notwithstanding, being restless and full of curiosity to know who and what that strange man on the island might be, I resolved to get to the shore if possibly I could, and began to cast about for a way.

Had the cock-boat been afloat, it had been easy if I waited until night came ; for the sea was smooth, and the men did not use to keep a good watch. But only the jolly-boat lay in the water, and that I could not manage. She lay under our quarter.

But, when I saw how she tugged at her lashing towards the shore, I took a thought ; for I perceived, that, if the tide held until night, I might safely trust to drive ashore in her, and, peradventure, get off unseen. Concluding, therefore, to make the attempt if the tide held, I disposed myself to wait the time.

At last it became quite dark ; whereupon I stole softly into the great cabin (which, by good luck, I found empty), stepped to a port-hole and looked without.

The shine of a bright star just overhead showed me that the jolly-boat held in the same posture, and that the tide still flowed. I opened

the port, and, scrambling up, made a leap for the jolly-boat. I lighted on my toes in the stern-sheets, making but little noise ; and, having recovered my balance, I had soon cut through the lashing with my knife. Unseen by any man on the ship, I drove quickly towards the shore.

At length the boat grounded on the sandy bottom ; and, catching up a rope that was fastened in the bows, I boldly ventured to leap ashore. But hereupon I came nigh to be scared out of my wits ; for, falling foul of an obstacle that lay there below, I rolled over, clutching with my fingers a shaggy hide, and a huge creature rose up beside me, being quite six times bigger than a seal, and did roar like a lion. And, indeed, a lion I took him to be ; for his head, as I saw it, was exactly like a lion's. However, he shambled away, and left me ; and now I know 'twas a creature called a sea-lion.

This rencounter shook my spirit ; so that, having got to my feet, I stood quaking with fear of the darkness, or rather of unknown terrors the darkness might hold concealed. And, being also very cold and wet from my immersion in the breaking waves, I began hugely to repent of my coming hither, and devoutly wished it had been possible to return—nay, I was ready to halloo to the ship ; but shame withheld me.

Now, whilst I thus stood, a voice spoke to me almost at my feet.

“ Ha ! little pilgrim,” came the voice. “ Ha ! little pilgrim ! ” ’Twas harsh and grating like a rusty lock.

Immediately after, a man rose up from an empty water-hole that lay near in my path.

He was a small man, and very wild looking, having a shock of touselled red hair and beard that nigh covered his face, and clothed in rags and patches. He stood clutching the staff and tattered banner which we had observed from the ship, and peered in my face with his glittering eyes.

"Ha! little pilgrim," cried he again. "What is your sin, shipmate? What ha' been your offence against the Righteous?"

I perceived he was stark mad. "I have slain a man in a duel," said I, humouring him.

"Ha! 'twas a sore offence," cried he, and began to wave his banner above my head, "'Twas a black sin, Jesus ha' mercy! 'Twas a most grievous transgression. Now, look'e hereon, shipmate! Behold, it shall be as an ensign on an hill!"

Hereupon he turned from me, and made with great bounds towards a high boulder which stood at a few yards' distance. He set the staff in a cleft of the rock, crying: "Behold the ensign of the Lord! Look'e on the banner, shipmate, and say after me, 'Father I have sinned afore Heaven and afore Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son.'"

A gust of wind took the banner, stretching it out, and I beheld upon it the Royal device of Spain. I began to repeat the words; but he took me up short.

"Gramercy!" cried he, "Look on the ensign, can't you? Look on the ensign! Now, over agen!"

I perceived by the look in his rolling eyes that he was on the verge of a frenzy-fit, and I hasted to humour him to the letter.

When I had said and acted to his satisfaction, he took the banner in his hand again, and began to wave it over my head, and absolved me (as he called it) in a hotch-potch jargon of Scriptural and nautical phrase. Madness makes ever a rueful picture, but the shape this man's took was extremely scandalising to me ; and it may easily be believed, that now I repented more than ever of having come on shore, and would have given a great deal to have been safe back on the ship again. But there was worse to come.

For, when this business of absolving me was over, the madman took another notion ; and, having muttered to himself once and twice, he, on a sudden bawled out :

“ It is written, ‘ He that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ ”

Hereupon he lowered fiercely round at me, clapt his hand behind him, and plucked from his belt a long macheat. At the sudden sight of the bare blade glittering in the dark night, I started back, and then stepped quickly to one side as the madman made a lunge on me.

Thus I eluded his intent, and immediately after took to my heels, running blindly in the darkness. I heard him close behind me, the furious haste he made, his quick pants, mingled with curses. I struck my feet against stones ; I bruised my body against the jagged sides of boulders ; every moment I expected to feel that

murdering great knife come crashing in my bones.

Suddenly I tumbled into a water-hole, hurting my ankle (though I scarce did feel it); but got out, set my back to a great boulder that stood near, drew my rapier, and made shift to parry a lunge in the nick of time.

And, as the madman blundered in on me with the impulse of the blow, I caught his wrist in a desperate gripe, and twisted his arm round, until he dropped his knife, roaring with pain. Thereupon I set my point to his breast, and had him at my will.

"Up with your arms," said I smartly, "or I'll run you through!"

He was not so mad but he understood, and held up his arms immediately; but his eyes kept harking down to his knife, until, with a kick of my unhurt foot, I removed it out of reach.

"Now," said I, speaking very slowly, "you see, don't you, that you are quite helpless. If you do not exactly as I bid you, I shall run you through the heart. I bid you instantly to drop upon the ground and lay quite flat."

And I advanced my point until it pressed upon his breast-bone.

"Ay, ay!" said he, and immediately cast himself flat.

So far, so well; but what was next to do I knew not: I had no cord or rope to have bound him; nor withal could I securely have attempted it, for he was stronger than I. Moreover, my

hurt ankle now began to pain me much. There appeared nothing for it but to bide on guard until day, when I trusted to be succoured from the ship. Accordingly, with a rueful mind and a tired body, I disposed myself to the miserable vigil.

For a pretty long while the man lay quiet and perfectly still, whilst I took up my posture, as easy as I could, on a ledge of the rock, having my drawn sword in my hand. I marvelled that he spoke not; and kept the better look-out, lest he should contemplate a surprise. At length I could endure the silence no longer, and brake it.

"My man," said I, "how came you here on this island?"

I spoke at adventure, not expecting any reasonable reply. I was, therefore, startled and perfectly astonished when he said:

"I was marooned, Cap'n. 'Twas pirates marooned me."

"Oh," said I, "and how long ago was that?"

"'Tis many a year—ay, many a year!" said he. "It mought be ten, it mought be twelve. Many a weary year. I lived liker a beast, all alone, alone!"

"What was your ship," said I, "that was taken by these pirates?"

"What was my ship?" said he. "Why, I was aboard of 'em. The Doctor sent us——"

"The Doctor!" exclaimed I, breaking in on him. "What Doctor? Not the master of the Haunted Island?"

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"Ay," said he, sitting up, and staring on me—his face had turned deadly pale, and his voice quavered—"but you a'n't come from him, lad? No, no, not from him! You a'n't. Say you a'n't!"

"Be easy as to that," said I. "No, I am not come from the Doctor."

"Then how know you of him?" said he. "How? How? Never lie to me, on your soul! The Lord do the like to you if you deal falsely. Behold, I am come in the name of the Lord! In the Lord's name!.."

But I forbear to set down the things he uttered in the frenzy-fit that thus, on a sudden, seized on him. Nor did he return again to reason; but, all night long, lay silent or raving; whilst I kept watch and ward.

Towards dawn he slept: but I dared not take any rest myself, nor leave watching of him for a moment. Indeed, the pain of my hurt served to keep me awake. In that hour, while it was yet dark, came the noise of a commotion on board the ship, being occasioned (as I learnt after) by the discovery that the jolly-boat, and I, also, were gone; and, so soon as it became light, I gladly beheld the longboat manned and making for the shore. My brother sat in the stern-sheets.

They landed below the jolly-boat, which lay high and dry, for the tide had ebbed; whereupon I hallooed to them.

"Is that you, Frank?" cried the Captain; and, when I stepped from behind the boulder

and he spied me, he immediately threw himself into a great rage, or so it appeared, rushing to me, and threatening me with his fists and crying :

“What do you mean by this, you whelp, you ? Do you dare to flout my orders ? If you were not a boy, I would hang you up at the yard !”

I had taken this very ill, and (being in a fume from my painful and tedious vigil), had resisted and outbraved him to his face ; but, from a sign which he contrived to make me, I perceived what he would be at, that this fury was all a pretence and he did it for the sake of the men. Accordingly, taking the hint, I put on a very humble, repentant bearing towards him.

Now, whilst he rated me as above (the seamen standing by), the mad maroon awoke from sleep, and, sitting up, began to stare fixedly on him. This put my brother out, so that he stumbled in his speech, and broke off to ask me what the man was. So I gave him an account of all that had fallen out. When I had ended, he ordered the man to be bound ; which immediately was performed, he offering but little obstruction. Hereupon we went all to the longboat, the madman, who now began to mutter and rave after his manner, being haled along by two seamen, and I borne by two others, for I could not walk. Nay, though they carried me gently, I suffered much pain.

On coming to the launch, they took out water-jars which they had brought ashore, and put into her myself and the crazy man, who ceased not to call down curses on us in his mad

religious jargon. On this account, the seamen had much fun out of the poor antic, jeering and mocking him ; but, however, this was displeasing to the Captain, and suddenly he turns on one of them, crying :

“Be done with this, you yokel fool ! You’re like some silly schoolboy teasing a village idiot ! Be done with it ! Be done with it !”

I liked this well ; but the chidden seaman liked it not at all. He glared at the Captain ; who glared back at him. Thereupon, sinking his head, the man looked round upon his fellows, but got no sort of encouragement from them ; for they held silent, looking this way and that. So he thought it convenient to hold his peace.

I was rowed with the crazy man to the ship. He was laid bound in the forecastle. Surgeon Burke took charge of me ; and, having looked at my hurt ankle, he told me I must lay up for at least a fortnight.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WARNING SEA.

WE parted from the Isle of Juan Fernandez after two days, which we stayed to fill our water, cut firewood, and drive goats.

My confined state was very irksome to me, after the freedom I had enjoyed on board and the daily fare of new and strange experiences. However, I employed the time pleasantly enough in learning the Spanish language, as much as I could of it by means of an old torn copy of *Don Quixote* and a Spanish dictionary, which I chanced to find in a corner ; and, indeed, got much diversion from that merry and sorrowful tale.

Sometimes my brother came to me ; though he stayed not long. And Surgeon Burke stood my friend throughout ; coming to chat with me often, and giving me news of anything remarkable that might have happened in the interim. Notably, he told me, that my brother had questioned the mad maroon (at a time when he was in his right mind) of the Haunted Island ; but, that, on learning we were thither bound, such huge terror seized on the poor man, that, rather than carry him to the island, he besought the Captain on his knees

to cause him to be shot, or thrown into the sea, and was immediately after transported with a violent raving crazy-fit ; that on the morrow he was not to be found anywhere in the ship. 'Twas supposed he had made a shift to loosen the cords that bound his limbs, and, having got up on deck, had jumped overboard and drowned himself in the sea.

"Either this, also, was part of his madness," said Burke, "or else there's something monstrous terrible on the Haunted Island!"

"But did he not fright the men?" said I. "I mean, about going to the Haunted Island."

"Why, bless you, no!" says he. "They put it down to his whimsies."

This was in the first week after our departure from Juan Fernandez. We had made good way on our course, which was S.W. having a brave settled gale at W.N.W. On the morrow, however, when I awoke, I was sensible the ship was tost like an eggshell, as, indeed, she was, in a high cockling sea.

It held all day. Late in the afternoon, Burke, coming into the cabin, was thrown headlong with a sudden violent lurching of the ship. I laughed to see him go rolling over (being a little round man); but he got to his feet with a very long countenance, which rather abashed me. Yet was it not like Burke to take umbrage, and I presently perceived that that was not the matter with him. He was concerned in his mind about the men.

They were, it seemed, in a most villainous

temper, by reason of the work they had had with the ship. For, ever since one o'clock in the morning, when the wind came to N.E. and the sea swelled, they had not found so much as a moment's respite. First (the ship having been put under a forecourse and spritsail), the foresail split. Then, when the yard had been lowered and that matter remedied, the standing rigging gave way in several places. That having been mended, the wind began to whiffle between all points ; whereupon the Captain set them a brave dance up and down the rigging in his eagerness to make way. At length, the wind blowing and whiffing worse than ever, our main-course blew to pieces ; "and now the mizzen's given way !" said Burke, holding up his hands.

"It's a scurvy business," said I, "but I see not why you should be put out about the men. Let them be ! They'll come about anon, like wind and weather. In my opinion, wind and weather are rather to be feared than so many silly seamen !"

"And your opinion is out," said Burke tartly. "You've never experienced a mutiny aboard ship, have you ? No ; well, pray that you never may ! A mutiny is what we've been in fear of all along ; and, it seems, what that miserable maroon gave out about the Haunted Island stuck with the men after all, and now it works. And there goes a word among them that this blast and hurly-burly, and coil of trouble with the sails, is a warning from God Almighty that we should go no farther on this voyage ; and,

when seamen have stuck on this sort of notion, you may spare your labour and let be: not all your endeavours, nor arguments, nor persuasions, nor appeals, look you, will avail to hale 'em off! And now," says he, "I must go; the Captain may have need of me."

With that, he departed, leaving me to conjure up dismal forebodings, to the music of the groaning ship, the stamping of the mariners, the brunt and welter of the roaring seas, and the continual shrieking of the winds.

Thus I sat hearkening for any sound that might betoken a rising of the men, with intent to sally forth on the first sign or appearance of an alarm. However, I heard nothing; and at the customary time the ship's boy came to light the lantern and bring my supper, which made me conclude there was no mutiny so far. The ship laboured more than ever now, and the boy told me that we lay a hull in a huge roaring sea, in drizzling rain and very dark weather.

I turned into my hammock, and composed myself to sleep, yet with small expectation thereof. However, I slept very well until the morning.

When I woke, I found Burke was come into the cabin. He told me that the wind, the sea, and the disaffection of the mariners were sunk together.

"I told you that it would be so," said I; but, "Not so fast, young cockerel!" says he. "It would not have been so, and the men had mutinied beyond doubt, but for a curious

occurrence and a piece of good fortune, which the Captain had the wit and sagacity to lay hold on.

"'Twas so: in the mid-watch, after the wind came to W. and sunk, and the ship recovered her course, the men came together in a gang, and the boatswain, stepping to the Captain, begged him, on behalf of the whole ship's company, to bear up the helm and proceed no farther in that course. The Captain enquired what they found amiss with the course, and was answered, that, in the blustering weather, and in the many lets and hindrances they had met withal they did clearly perceive the hand of Almighty God warning them against going on. The Captain used all persuasions to turn them from this opinion; but he had as well laboured to have turned the wind. When he found he could not overstay them, he told them plainly that he would not leave his course on any considerations. 'Nor,' added he, 'would you wish me to do it, if you but knew, or had any notion of, what a rich and kingly treasure is there!'"

"Thereupon the men withdrew to the fore-castle to consult. Now, a little after, while they thus stood, came a violent furious tornado, which went roaring past our stern at about our ship's length away. On that, without a moment's hesitation, the Captain goes to the men, and, 'Look 'e here, my lads,' says he, 'you saw that tornado? Well, where would we ha' been, think you, had it struck us? Answer me that!'"

"'Why, Cap'n,' says the boatswain, 'I suppose we would ha' foundered.'

“‘Ay,’ says the Captain, returning sharply on him, ‘I suppose we would! And now hear another thing, if I had borne up the helm, as you desired me to do, where would we ha’ been then? Why, bang in the middle of the tornado, ye lunkheads! Now, where’s your warning hand of God Almighty—heh?’ says he. Ay, that brother of yours hath a headpiece to his shoulders, look you, Frank!”

“And so, then,” said I, “that turned them.”

“Turned them? Why, guinea-pigs in a cage aren’t more tractable! And, talking of guinea-pigs,” says the waggish fellow, smiling on me, “Talking of guinea-pigs, I have to tell ye, you are now freed from your cage, and may quit your bed and cabin.”

You may be sure I was glad enough to hear this; and, Burke helping me, I rose up, and went stiffly out to the deck.

The day was clear and bright, with white scud-cloud flying towards the west; the sea much fallen. The ship sailed heavily, making a due west way. Her topworks were loose, but she had sustained no leaks. The Captain took the sun, and seemed to be much satisfied with the observation.

It came out, indeed, that, instead of hindering us, the blustering weather had given us great heaves on our course.

The wind and sea held favourable; and some ten days after, by Ouvery’s chart, we should be within forty leagues, more or less, of the Haunted Island.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GHOST

ABOUT four o'clock after noon, the look-out man in our foreyard cried :

"Land a-weather bow."

This put a strange spirit into the mariners, half eager, half fearful ; as might be seen from their restless demeanour and furtive converse one with another. And, as it seemed to me, the very ship began to sail faster, straining and leaping, drenching her beakhead. Soon we began to have other warrants than the testimony of the look-out man that land was nigh, tokens in the air and sea : a gaudy landfowl came and perched on a yardarm ; a piece of rockweed drove along by the ship's side.

The sun sank ; but the air was clear like crystal, and suddenly a mariner standing in the bows, sang out :

"There it be ! There it be ! I spies it."

And immediately I descried the land, as a blue mist, as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand, close aboard the horizon.

"Ay, there it be ! there it be !" cried a score of voices. "There be the island !"

And my brother answered from the quarter-deck :

“Right, my lads! Yonder’s the island! There you’ll make all your fortunes, my jolly boys!”

They gave a great huzza on this; but, as it died away, one called to my brother, saying:

“Begging your pardon, Cap’n, but me and my shipmates be particular curious to know whether what that mad maroon told of had any truth in’t. I means, about there being a ghost on that island!”

But the Captain answered with a great scoff and bluster.

“A ghost on the island!” says he, “Ghost of my grandmother! They do say that there’s a man in the moon; but you can only see the face of him. Now, as touching this man in the moon, what I am *particular curious* to know, is: where hath he his body and his legs?”

This brought much laughter upon that seaman, and stopped his mouth. But Burke nipped my arm; and, when the merry din subsided, he blew it up again.

“Where be his body and his legs, Captain?” roared he. “Why, he hath lent ’em to the ghost on the island!”

Meanwhile the island enlarged itself in our view, and the colour of it changed to purple.

’Twas very long and high. It lay north and south.

Still we made in, and soon towering cliffs appeared, with jagged ridges of hills on the high land.

But now the light began to fade, so that the

island could no longer be seen. Darkness fell apace ; and, as it did so, the wind sunk and died quite away. Hereupon, within two miles of the shore, we anchored the ship.

Now, at this time, and, indeed, from a good while previous, we heard from the land a booming sound, which at first we took to be nothing but the clamour of breakers ; but Thalass told us it was the voice of a great waterfall from the lofty cliff.

I supped that night with my brother and with Surgeon Burke in the great cabin, and I expected the Captain would speak of his plans. But, on the contrary, he spoke scarce a word, seeming to brood in his mind. Only, having risen from his chair, he told us that he went to give orders for our ports to be opened and our guns run out, new-primed and double-shotted ; for, that, though it was unlikely any menace or danger from the island would come up in the night, yet he thought it convenient to be prepared.

I thought my brother was become thinner of late ; his face was pale, and had a drawn, grim look ; and, though he was yet but young, methought he had gotten grey hairs.

After he had gone, Burke and I sat awhile over the board, talking of the mysterious chances of the morrow ; I say *of the morrow*, for neither did we anticipate anything to happen during the night.

At last we rose, and went on deck, towards the end of the first watch. There all hands

were gathered. They stood most by the star-board bulwarks forward, and in the waist, gazing upon the island, which, the moon being risen, appeared like a shadow on the sea.

They were strangely silent. I became sensible of a tenseness amongst them. If any man spoke, 'twas in a whisper, or scarce more than a whisper; as if terror possessed their minds. And now, no doubt, they recalled, and believed implicitly, every word and dark terrible hint spoken of the Haunted Island by the mad maroon. To make a clean breast, I must confess, I began to be uneasy myself.

The wind was fallen to a flat calm, the sea moved with a sluggish, and yet fitful motion—as if it, too, were uneasy, and affrighted, and unable to sleep. The moon was at the full, yet having none of the extraordinary brightness common in these latitudes, and showing small and dull, as through a veil of crape. It shone upon the ship, and upon the stagnant sea, with a pale dank light, that had mystery in it, and waiting, and devilry.

Suddenly it began to grow darker. Darkness closed in on all sides around like a quivering black curtain. I looked up. As far as eye could see, a thickening layer of cloud closed slowly upon the moon.

The tension increased. All felt that something was about to happen. No man so much as whispered now, or stirred hand or foot; I could hear the beating of my heart. And while we thus stood, the apparition came.

"Hist ! Hist ! Merciful God !"

It was a shrouded human figure whose stature reached the clouds ; and it arose and stood forth upon the shore of the island. The flowing garments of the figure were white like snow, and glistening.

For a moment, it stood motionless ; then, as it should seem, a covering fell from the head of it, revealing a visage that sometimes, even now, returns to me in sleep, and is a terror of the midnight, so that I start from that nightmare shaking and gasping, a scream upon my lips !

The eyes of the figure were fixed upon us. We stood like men turned to stone.

There was a little ship's boy there, and his reason was not of strength to bear it ; so that he gave a shriek at that prodigy, and went stark raving mad. And on that, my brother collected himself.

He looked upon the poor crazy lad, and then away again at the horrid thing to starboard ; and he rapped out an oath that was one of the pleasantest sounds I ever heard. Then, swinging round upon the horror-struck mariners, "To quarters !" roared he. "To quarters, Wallis ! Give it a broadside, the devil's thing ! Smite it in its devil's face ! Give it iron—iron, by thunder !"

And immediately, like men loosed from enchantment, they sprang to life. They stamped upon the deck ; they shouted curses and defiance, shaking their clenched fists to the island and the

apparition there ; and, when the gunners went in a frenzy of haste to their stations, the rest followed them, helping and exhorting them in the work.

Soon all was in readiness, the gunners standing to their pieces, the muzzles of twenty cannon trained upon the Thing, which continued to stand motionless.

And now the command was given. The ship leaped and leaped again as the broadside blazed along, and volume upon volume of cannon-smoke hid all.

We strained our eyes.

Gradually the smoke lifted. *The figure was standing as before !*

And as that horrid countenance came forth again in view, fixedly looking on us, their terror returned upon the mariners, now come all up on deck again. Dazed with fear, they stood huddled together, every man clinging to his mate.

Suddenly the Captain cried :

“ Make sail ! ” But his voice was shrill and small ; and, glancing to starboard, he screamed :

“ Haste ! haste ! Make sail ! Cut the cable ! ”

Again the mariners did his bidding. Gibbering with affright, they swarmed aloft, crowding on sails ; whilst one ran and hacked through the cable with his hanger.

Suddenly the glimmering light cast by the phantom went out. The figure had disappeared. A cry arose, and the men on the yards and rigging ceased from their panic work.

But only for a moment ; and soon every sail was set, and every stitch of canvas got on her that our yards would spread. But there was no wind—no, not so much as to lift an ensign !

But there was a current run very swift to the southward, in a line with the shore, and the ship drove into the path of it, and began to be borne along with it. It carried us about two miles, when it took a turn, swirling gradually round to the shore. Hereupon we let go our sheet-anchor (it was the bower-cable that had been cut) ; but the bottom would not hold.

Then began the mariners to cry out, saying it was the dreadful phantom did this, putting an influence on the sea ; and they did murmur against the Captain, casting baleful glances at him, muttering and whispering one to another, because he had ensnared them and brought them to this place. But he regarded it not, standing motionless, with knit brows

Suddenly a man, being perfectly beside himself with rage and terror, laid hold on a carpenter's tool that had been left near him on the deck ; and made directly towards the Captain, brandishing the weapon and charging like a maddened bull.

And then, beyond doubt, my brother had miserably perished ; but Thalass chanced to be standing by, and, thrusting forth his foot as he passed, he effectually tripped up the infuriated man, so that he stumbled and pitched forward upon the deck. But—and here was a horrid

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thing—the man's weapon was jerked quite about in his fall, and he fell full upon the point of it, and was pierced through. Whereupon, being in an agony, and quite hopeless of recovery, the Captain shot him dead with his pistol.

Yet was the episode for good one way ; for the dreadful sight of it did so control and deaden the hearts of the rest, that they were withheld from mutineering (as, beyond doubt, they had been about to have done), and from murdering the Captain.

The rage and disaffection of the mariners were abated—but not their terror ! No whit less eager were they to be gone from this place, and to put many a sea-league betwixt them and the Haunted Island. And, as it came home to them, that, though the darkness concealed it, they drove on still nearer to the island, their panic returned upon them, and they made desperate endeavours to anchor the ship. At last it held—in but ten fathoms water !

Were we, then, gotten in so near to the shore, or was it shoal-water ?

We could hear no sound of breakers ; but the sea was flat calm, and the clamour of the waterfall still sounded, though less loud. We waited, huddled together like terrified children, peering into the thick darkness.

In that hour, my brother stepped to me, and took me apart beyond hearing of the rest ; and, looking upon him, I saw with a pang how grey and old he was become.

He began to speak tense and low.

"Boy," said he, "take my hand. So. Now say that you forgive me for all."

But, as I put my hand in his and tried to speak, he looked upon me long and tenderly as he had never looked before, and I think he knew it was the farewell, and that he would not be alive when the night was passed.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE CUT CABLE.

WHETHER my brother had spoken more, I know not ; for, on a sudden, there came a stir and commotion among the men, who began to move towards us in a gang.

When they were come near, one said hoarsely :

“Cap’n, we hears shore-breakers. Hearken now ! hearken to it !”

I listened, and above the clamour of the waterfall, I thought I did, indeed, hear the sound of breaking waves. But the seaman on a sudden cried :

“We be nearer shore ! Nearer shore, the Lord ha’ mercy on ’s !”

“Nearer shore !” cries the Captain. “Hath the anchor, peradventure, come home in a duck-pond ? Why, you lunkhead, she is fast as iron locks !”

“Then look there !” said the other, and pointed down upon the sea forward.

The thick darkness, which had held until now with no rift in the cloud-pall, was broken. A shaft of moonshine took the sea hard by our cutwater ; and the Captain, following it, gave a great start. *The ship was in motion again !*

“Driving, by thunder !” cried he ; and, running to the head, he laid hold of the cable, and hauled

on it. It began to come in slack and easy ; and soon a loose end appeared. *The cable had been severed !*

My brother stood motionless, the dripping rope's end dangling from his hand. Then he swung fiercely round upon the Mosquito Indian.

"If this be your handywork, my man," cried he ; "if I do but half trace it to your hands, you shall hang—you shall hang at that yardarm !"

But Thalass reared himself haughtily up, and looked him in the face ; and the Captain was abashed.

He turned to the men. "My lads," said he weightily and slow, "whether there be treachery here I know not. Look you to that ! Look well to it if you'd live, and drag out the villainous man ! As for me, witness all, I am contriving and fending for you no less than for myself ! If any man have a grievance against me, let him out with it now. Ay !" cried he hotly, as they began to press upon him, "and if you'd depose me, do even so ; I care not a jot ! You're but a scullion crew. Choose ye another captain : I grow weary of it ! Weary of it !"

His challenge rang loud ; but they held silent while many moments passed ; and, when one of them said humbly, "We make no quarrel against you, Cap'n ; we be mazed men," the rest answered with a great heartiness. Yet took they heed of what the Captain had said concerning treachery, looking narrowly one upon another ; and there fell a dispute and questioning among them.

The conclamation was broken off suddenly, on a man crying out that we were come among the very breakers of the shore ; and scarce his voice had died away, when, with a lamentable dull grating sound, the ship struck, ploughing long and deep into the bottom of sand. The breakers swayed her languidly from side to side with a dismal motion, while the despairing cry arose, "Now we be gone indeed, the Lord ha' mercy on us ! We shall never see our homes again !"

And the crazy lad took up the word, crying :

"We shall never see our homes again ! Never ! never ! never ! Jack ! poor Jack ! Never ! never ! never ! never ! What's to become of poor Jack ? Home again ! home from sea ! Never ! never ! never ! never ! Mother, I've brought ye a parrot. . ."

But hereupon the boatswain, stepping to him, laid hold on the poor antic, and, with a silken band which he had, gagged him effectually. At the same time my brother put a period to the dejection and amazement, with blustering words driving the men to labour.

He caused a great match to be contrived, that we might learn how far we lay from the shore. And, when they had set light to the tinder bound about the end of a boarding-pike, and held it forth over the sea, we descried the shore about a cable's length away.

Hereupon the Captain turns to the men, and "Well, my lads," says he, "Who'll proffer for a shore-party ?"

But no man answered, save only Surgeon

Burke, Thalass, and myself (we being even eager to go) ; and, looking scornfully on the timorous men, my brother said shortly :

“ Out with the boat ; I’ll go alone.”

Hereupon he went to his cabin to provide himself for the adventure ; and, having returned, put himself immediately into the cock-boat, which had been hoisted out and lay tumbling in the languid breakers.

He began to row towards the shore.

We watched him pass over the black waters in the lurid matchlight.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ISLAND OF THE HOLY.

FOR what time my brother should be gone, Wallis, the master-gunner, was left in command ; and he presently ordered the lighted match to be fastened in the waist, and three more matches to be made, and disposed severally on the lar-board, at the head, and on the poop. Sentinels, moreover, were posted all round the ship.

An hour passed. Silence was fallen upon the ship ; for some had gone below, and the rest (saving the sentinels) lay sleeping and waking between the guns. The waterfall sounded but faint, and the breakers beat with a low clamour that seemed muffled by the cloak of the darkness. Suddenly, from a point close at hand on the shore, came a sound of singing !

Sweet and tuneful was the note, and full and lovely as the voice of a celestial being ; an exceeding melodious high treble, so that it seemed to be no mortal that sang, but a spirit from High Heaven. And thus it was :

Stay not in the land of sighing,
Stay not in the vale of tears ;
Where the phantom of the years
Haunts the weary and the dying :
Lo ! the Island of the Holy . . .

And suddenly it ceased. Clear on the silent night was borne a cry—a loud, long-drawn, quavering cry that told of terror and suffering and the plucking forth of a life. Falling at that season, and amid those dark and dreadful mysteries, it was a thing to make the blood of the boldest run cold.

Yet sorrow took hold on me at the sound ; for I knew the voice : it was the death-cry of my brother.

The rest of the night passed uneventful. I remained on deck, weeping and brooding.

I was sensible of having grown suddenly older, of having from a lad changed into a careworn man.

CHAPTER XVI.

SPIES OF CANAAN.

DAY dawned in crimson and gold ; up rose the sun, and showed us the Haunted Island.

There was a narrow shore of white sand, curving and twisting with stupendous cliffs, the sheer and beetling fronts of which could not have had less than fifteen hundred feet. A little to the left we spied an opening, wherein a river ran spating down to the sea, making a great indraught of the water, and occasioning, no doubt, the current that had horsed us in.

It was now flood of tide ; yet the depth of water was increased but little, and, to our dismay, the ship remained fast.

On seeing this, Wallis, the new Captain, caused great store of heavy gear to be hove overboard to lighten her. Yet 'twas all one : the ship would not budge. Thereupon we got out the boats and fastened tow-lines, to have rowed her off ; but we could not. Nay, it had been all one even if we could have floated her ; for soon the land-breeze sunk, and then the wind came from the sea.

So they gave over the attempt ; and, their anxiety being somewhat abated with the labour, they turned in to breakfast.

I fared with Wallis in the great cabin, his mate—one Peter Burrows—remaining with the watch on deck. Wallis was very moody and cross, and I dwelt heavily on the death of my brother ; so that the meal passed with but scant speech. Wallis, afterwards going to the quarter-deck, called lustily for all hands ; and, when they were come together, he made them a sort of rambling speech.

“Shipmates,” said he, “there a’n’t no manner of need for me to tell you how we lay. You know what fell yester-night, that there be dark things hatching yonder. We be fallen in on the Devil’s island by the look on’t. Ay, but we don’t properly know that yet ! We a’n’t got the bearings of this business ; and maybe we’re like children frightened with tricks and shows.

“Howsoever, this here a’n’t no sort o’ berth for you and me, and I’d scamper away full-sail if I could. But I can’t. We be stuck here as fast as so many limpets ; and when the wind rises she’ll split, and we’ll be scurrying ashore like rats !

“Well, then, I’m for leaving of her now, afore the break-up comes—ay, and afore the night comes, too ! There be the boats ; but this here a’n’t the English Channel, and yonder a’n’t the cliffs of Dover, and what we mought look for in the boats a’n’t pleasant to think. No, there’s no way out on’t that course, sure ! So I gives my vote for going ashore and boarding ’em while there’s light. . . And then the treasure !—you a’n’t forgot the treasure, mates, as we’ve come so

far for to get it? Well, then, who'll offer for a shore-party to spy 'em out?"

The words were brave and mettlesome enough. But there was no weight in them. All was hollow; and the seamen listening were nothing slow to divine this. The speech fell short of the mark, moving no man. Wallis, indeed, was weighed in the balance and found wanting there and then; for, when a seaman asked, "And would you go along with us, Wallis?" he halted out, "Nay, shipmate, for I must mind the ship"—an answer which put a period to that enterprise.

The seamen held off glum and murmuring, no man offering. If, however, they had no stomach for the work, Thalass and I were even eager to set foot on the island; and, when Wallis and the rest perceived this, they were nothing backward to encourage us, giving us good words, proffering us small-arms and ammunition, whilst some ran to the cook-room to fetch victuals for us, and others put themselves into the jolly-boat to row us ashore.

Surgeon Burke would have gone with us, but it seemed to him, and to us also, that his duty lay rather in remaining on the ship.

Our first care on landing was to search the parts of shore for the dead body of the Captain, for we doubted not that he was dead; but found nothing.

After that, we turned alongshore to the southward, looking out for an opening into the island. Thalass told me that he was able to guide me

to the habitation of the pirates, but, however, that it was far distant at the south side of the island, and the journey and return not possibly to be accomplished before night, to say nothing of the risk we would run by attempting it. I answered that therefore we should not attempt it, but take instead a random course, making what discoveries we could.

We advanced warily, having each of us a loaded pistol in his hand ; and, coming round an elbow of the cliff beneath a gigantic headland, we lost sight of the ship. The character of the prospect remained unchanged, the bleached white sands stretching away to the next bend, the towering cliffs frowning upon us. The Indian marched briskly at my side, perfectly at his ease, as it should seem, and fearing no evil ; but I went harassed with a thousand apprehensions, and was sometimes brought to a stand by fantastical alarms.

The dreadful death-cry of my brother still sounded in my ears, and even more than the apparition on the shore, it put a fear on me. One while glancing back fearfully over my shoulder, another while looking aloft at those stupendous summits, I went, indeed, like a haunted man.

At length, being gotten about a league along the shore, we spied that we were looking out for—an opening in the cliffs. For, a little in advance of us, as we coasted round beneath a headland, the cliffs were quite broken off about two ships' lengths, leaving an inlet of the island indeed !

A spacious and gentle valley it was, sloping from the shore between the ends of the cliffs, which were all hung about with vines, and adorned with waving groves and rustling tall tufted grasses and flowers crimson blue and green. We immediately began to ascend, making towards a colossal boulder of rock near forty feet in height. Coming up to it, we climbed, by jagged ridges, creepers and rockweed, to the top, and there stood to view the country.

'Twas a charming panorama — champaign, woody, and rocky in grateful alternation, or confused and intermingled as in some silent conflict ; but of man, or man's habitation, not a trace ! I asked Thalass whether this part of the island was really uninhabited ; he answered after his broken manner :

"This side only him spirit, great, big ; look." (Here he made a grimace that gave me a scare, so like it was to that dreadful visage), "and him little spirit, sing :

Stay not in the land of sighing,
Stay not in the vale of tears . . ."

But hereupon I cut him short ; for, indeed, he sang so marvellously mimicking that other voice, that I could not bear it.

We descended the great boulder ; and, the hour being about midday and the sun shining hot, we looked out for a place to rest in, and found it beneath the shade of a banana tree. The tree was full of fruit, and we ate of it very deliciously, and quenched our thirst at a clear spring that was near.

We returned to our journey, or rather ramble, of discovery, but lighted on nothing remarkable ; nor saw we any appearance of man. So, the afternoon beginning to be far spent, and we a great way from the shore, I thought it time to be jogging from thence ; for this finding no men in the island had in no wise allayed, but rather increased, my apprehensions, and the thought of being overtaken by night there went very much against my inclination.

Accordingly, we turned about, stepping out briskly towards the shore ; meanwhile the sky became overcast with clouds. We came through the ravine to the shore, and soon, to our great content, in sight of the ship.

Drawing near, I hailed her. But there came no answer, nor could we descry a man upon her decks. I thought this looked very strangely : I hallooed a second time ; but again no answer.

And now a nameless fear began to take hold on me ; but, stepping to the marge of the shore, I tried a third time, giving a great halloo. Yet came there no answer : there was no sound nor motion ; there was not a sign of life on the ship !

But twilight had fallen this while, and the clouds looked black ; and, even as my voice yet echoed from the cliff, there fell a shadow vast and vague, and dark shut down upon us like a lid !

Then grew I afraid, indeed, drawing closer to the Indian, who, too, I think, felt the terror now.

"The place is enchanted," said I, "we are lost!"

But the cock-boat lay where the Captain had left her upon the shore; and, getting her down, we launched forth, intending to row out in a bee-line and shoot for the ship. For, though concealed by the darkness, we knew how she lay.

We began to row, steering with the greatest heed, until, by our reckoning, we had made way enough, and should be up to the ship. Yet no ship appeared.

We went a little farther; yet no sign of her.

Peering fearfully into the darkness, we ceased to row. I took my pistol and fired it in the air, listening for an answering hail or gunshot; but none came.

'Tis a wonder I never thought to contrive a flare with some tinder or other and my flint and steel; but the truth is, my mind was completely over-run and confused with innumerable fluttering thoughts and whimsies and frightful apprehensions. It came to me, indeed, that the ship was no longer there, but had been spirited away by enchantment. Nor, in view of the dreadful mysteries of the place, will the reader be likely to censure me.

Thalass thrust his hand into the sea. It was immediately whelmed, the water gushing up over his wrist: *the boat was being borne along by a swift current!*

The night was very dark, the sea moderately calm. It was becoming cold, so that we were

very glad of the liquor in our flasks ; for, each taking a dram, it warmed and spirited us.

Soon I observed the Indian to nod, for his eyes were heavy ; and I told him that he might sleep, for I would watch. He sunk to slumber immediately. But I was sore fatigued, and the cock-boat rocked with a gentle motion : sleep stole upon me like an enemy, making at the last, as it were, a stealthy spring ; in short, before ever I could take thought to have waked the Indian, I, too, slept.

Suddenly we were awakened.

There had come a great sound of cannonading on the sea ; the last of it was still in my waking ears. It seemed to have come from close by. The night drew on towards the dawn, and was not so pitchy dark ; I thought I made out the loom of a large ship. Ay, it was a ship !

But not for long ! Scarce, indeed, had she hazily taken form before our eyes, but, with a prodigious sound, she blew up.

Stunned by the concussion, I swooned in the boat.

CHAPTER XVII.

DOCTOR COPICUS.

HOW long I lay in the swoon I know not ; but, on my coming out of it, a strange, shrill voice sounded in my ears.

I looked up, to behold a man who stood by the side of a settee whereon I lay. He was a very tall, lean, aged man, dressed in a scarlet robe ; and I knew him : 'twas he whom the Englishman had called the Doctor. I was fallen into the hands of the Master of the Haunted Island !

The place was a little chamber, or cell, of stone. There was another there, and him, also, I recognised from the Englishman's account ; a young man, slender and pale, habited in black—who but the secretary, Ambrose ?

The Doctor observed me. "So!" said he softly, "The spirit hath returned to his ark of flesh. He hath returned void. . . No slightest olive-branch of knowledge. . ."

He smiled on me ; then, beckoning Ambrose after him, he went stoopingly from the place, the door shutting to upon them almost without sound.

I looked about me. The cell was plainly but handsomely furnished, the settee whereon I lay

having coverings of China silk, wrought in many colours with pictures of dragons. A little table of cedar stood beside. The floor was covered with a mat of grasses, woven in strands of red and green. There was no lamp ; the light, which was bright as day, proceeding I knew not whence. The cell was provided with air, it appeared, by a row of round holes, the size of musket-bores, pierced along the walls.

Soon Ambrose returned, bearing upon a salver a dainty repast of fish, fowl, and fruit ; and, having set it down upon the little table, he asked me pleasantly how I did.

"Very well, I thank you," said I, "but you, Ambrose, do scarce look as hearty as you ought, dwelling, as you do, in the Promised Land !"

He stared at me, then laughed a shrill laugh.

"So you know of us," said he, "who told you ? Ouvery ?"

"No," said I, "but another."

"Another ? and who was he ? But tell me, pray, how Ouvery died. He was a notable villain."

"He was so," said I. "But who told you that he was dead ?"

"Why," said he, "the Doctor had it from one of your men."

"They are, then, fallen into his hands ?" said I.

"They have joined us," said he. "The Doctor spoke with them whilst you and your Indian were gone away into the island, and they came over to us."

"He must be a wondrous talker, then," said I.
"He must have——"

"A golden tongue," said he.

"But what of the Indian?" said I. "He is not dead?"

"Nay, we found him with you in the boat. Both of you lay swooning; but the Indian revived apace, and is now with the rest of your company."

On that a phantom hope came upon my mind, and I said:

"Is my brother . . . Is the Captain alive also?"

"I do not know," said Ambrose; but I thought he lied to me, and I said hotly:

"He was foully murdered in this evil——"

"Soft! soft!" said he, cutting me short, "if you will take my counsel," said he in a low voice, "you'll chasten your tongue. If the Doctor had heard you, you'd not have an hour to live! And let me tell you, death is most dreadful here!"

I shuddered; but tried to conceal it, asking quickly:

"What manner of man is Doctor Copicus? Is he a magician? Is the island enchanted? What do you here?"

But he answered:

"I may not tell you these things. The Doctor will do so in his own good time. And I stay too long. Farewell. For the present, farewell."

And, deaf to the importunities that I made, he rose and went from the cell.

I reckoned up what I had learnt. 'Twas but little. One mystery, indeed, was resolved : that of the deserted ship. But of the island and its Master (save his name), I had learnt nothing. It did appear, however, that the presence of the man Ouvery amongst us at our first setting out, was known to Doctor Copicus ; whence, in all probability, it followed he was by him sent to my brother, to ensnare him and to occasion the mutiny and our voyaging hither.

But to what end ? What motives had persuaded Doctor Copicus to cause the coming of a renegade King's ship ? Perhaps, I thought, he might want the ship, her ordnance, her men.

I next turned my thoughts upon the ghostly figure that had frightened us. Was it supernatural ? Sure it must be ! For what cunning, short of sorcery, could possibly have contrived that horrible and diabolical appearance ? Nay, had the thing been contrived by Doctor Copicus to terrify us, how was it feasible that he wished to frighten us away, after (by my surmise) having enticed us to the island ?

I was deep in these cogitations, when, on a sudden, a shadow and a fear fell upon me ; and, looking round, I saw that Doctor Copicus again stood within the cell. I met his gaze—but could not support it, so searching was it.

“So, my lad,” said he, in mild and gentle tones, “hast made a good recovery. A sound mind in a sound body nature mends apace. Welcome, Francis Clayton, welcome to the Promised Land !”

"Sir," replied I, "I thank you, but ask your pardon if I know not what you mean by the Promised Land."

"Ha! and yet I supposed you not utterly unversed in Holy Writ!"

But a sudden anger for the man came upon me as I recalled my brother's death, and I said passionately:

"But what hath Holy Writ, forsooth, to do with an island in the South Sea, and a horde of cut-throat pirates?"

I was mad to have said it! A spasm crossed the face of Doctor Copicus, and left it terrible. His hands shook. He was silent, and the silence was to me as the gathering of doom.

"Durst—durst insult me!" cried he at last, hissing out the words, "Durst insult my disciples and my work? Durst outbrave me, ye viper? I'll cure you! Ha!"

He took a step towards the door; but a sudden faintness came over him. He staggered, and had fallen; but I sprang forward and bore him up, supporting him to the settee. He lay there heavily and still.

The countenance of the Doctor looked very old and haggard then, and white as the venerable locks that fell straggling upon his lofty forehead. His eyes were dim; his breathing came in gasps. Verily I thought his hour was come. But, while I stood wondering how the death of the man would work on my fortunes, a change came over him. He fetched a deep breath, and his brows drew together. He made, as I could see, a

mighty effort of his will. He collected his powers. He rose up from the settee, standing firmly upon his feet!

It was masterful ; it was magnificent. The man, who, but a moment past, had been, as it should seem, upon the threshold of death, did now stand up with the vigour of an iron strength ! But his anger was passed, and he said even gently as he turned to me :

“Lad, why do you vex me, courting death, and worse than death ? My intents towards you are fair, and fairer than you could possibly imagine. Hearken ! I would give you riches, and fame, and knowledge—the knowledge that lieth at the door of life !”

But hereupon Ambrose returned ; the Doctor spoke to him briefly in the Latin tongue, and betook himself from the cell.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RUNNING MAN.

AMBROSE immediately after bade me rise and make ready to follow him ; for he had in charge, he said, to take me to the *Cloisters*.

I was nothing loth. The curiosity I had to learn more of the island, was now, indeed, swollen to the highest pitch ; so, within a brief space, we went from the cell, coming into a passage of stone.

This passage was in all points like to that which the Englishman had given me an account of. There was, however, this difference in our experiences : that, whereas he had started in darkness to come by degrees into the shining of a dazzling white light, I, on the contrary, did meet with that strange illumination at the outset, finding it to decrease as we proceeded, until 'twas but a glimmer ; and so on into thickest darkness.

But soon, in the distance, appeared a faint brightness, like to the dim reflection of a mirror. We went a little farther. 'Twas the light of day. A door stood wide at the end of the corridor.

So came I forth from that mysterious prison-house, and stood again under the open heaven.

Before and on either side were thick woods, behind was the cavernous entry—yet having no appearance of masonry, for a tangle of many-blossomed creepers covered all.

But Ambrose, looking to see that I followed, stepped straightway to that which had all the look of a pathless thicket. When, however, we were gotten within, brushing aside bush and brake, there opened before us a path of the woods—yet so slender a path, that 'twas scarce to be discerned. Following it the distance of about a quarter of a mile, we came forth upon the cliff.

A battery stood against the sea, a huge rampart long and large, hewed out of the rock, and pierced at intervals in embrasures to accommodate the great brass guns—they were, indeed, of prodigious size—that bore upon the waters, fifty feet below. The guns were mounted upon carrages of iron, so as they could be turned this way or that, to bear at large upon the sea. About thirty feet behind them, stood a long house, built of massive blocks of stone, divided into store-rooms for the powder. The roof of it was thatched with wattle and felt, against the rains. Beside it, on end, stood another house, wherein were many pipes of muskets.

At the other end of the rampart, men wrought to extend it. A crew of bandits they were, dressed very slovenly and gay in silk and Indian cotton-stuff of many bright colours. Amongst them, I saw divers of our men, who wrought along with the others ; and, spying us, one or two

halloosed to me with hearty good cheer. But some looked ill at ease and very sullen.

We turned, making to the norward along the cliffs, having thick woods on our landward.

I looked to the sea-board, but could spy no ships. I asked Ambrose concerning the *Tiger* ; he told me men were at work upon her, getting ashore her guns, munition, and such other things as the Doctor needed.

I heard him to my small content. "But the men will not brook this," said I. "They'll rise."

"They must brook it," said he. "As to rising, the Doctor, be sure, has not failed to provide himself for that."

"What force hath he?" asked I.

"If you mean as to the number of his men," replied he, "not much, and yet abundance for your matter. But his strength is not in numbers."

"In what, then?" asked I.

"You'll learn that by observation," said he shortly.

Hereupon, being come to a place where the ground slanted steeply up, we turned and went inland beneath the slope.

"Say, are you learned?" asked Ambrose. "Can you read Latin?"

"Indifferent well," said I. "But why? Hath Doctor Copicus, peradventure, a charity-school in his island?"

He laughed his singular laugh. "Charity-school," said he, "is good! Yea, we shall put you to school! And do you see to it that you be industrious. Behold the marks of the rod!"

And, suddenly baring his forearm, he stretched it forth before me. *The flesh was scarred with the marks of heated irons!*

"Merciful Heaven!" cried I.

"Take warning, then!" said Ambrose, "take warning!" and covered his arm again.

This put a fear upon me, and I went on in a heavy muse. Suddenly I was aroused sufficiently! There had come, on a sudden, a most dreadful roaring sound, long drawn out, and proceeding, as it should seem, from the abysms of the earth: as if the earth had given tongue, like a great, savage wild beast, and was ready to open her jaws and swallow us in a moment!

Shaking as with an ague, I asked him what it was.

"You are pale," said he, "nor do I wonder, if this is the first time you have heard it. 'Tis the voice of the Mount of Dread."

"A volcan!" cried I, with swift understanding, "there is, then, a volcan in the island. But where? I see no height of a great mountain."

"The mightiness of the Mount of Dread," replied Ambrose, "appeareth not by height. Greatest and mightiest things look mean and ordinary—is't not so?"

"With high spiritual things," said I, "it may often be so; but with common things——"

"Nay, nay," said he, "you are in the wrong. Consider gunpowder, that sooty grain—how much of it, think you, should suffice to uproot and shake to pieces the firm foundation on which we stand?"

We were now come to woods in low land. We entered in, following a secret path.

Fain would I tell you of the beauty of these woods ; but, unless you could behold them, 'twere impossible you would understand.

I passed through them entranced. The woods on the shore of the Island of Hispaniola were beautiful, but not as these were ; the foliage was not so shining green, nor so delicately rare. How can I tell you of the immense, massy leaves of the breadfruit trees ? Of the great feathery ferns ? Of the climbing ferns, knit in a network between the polished stems of the cocoa-palms, or hanging in air on their long, tremulous, hair-like trails ?

Here and there, the undergrowth was decked with blossoming shrubs, pale primrose and gorgeous crimson. High overhead, close and intertwined, hung the fronds of the palm trees, gently stirred by the breeze, glinting and flashing in the green sunlight, like a roof wrought in jade.

As we passed, a bevy of blue and scarlet birds started in the thicket amongst the fall grasses, and flew scattering up through the palm-fronds like winged blossoms, but with scarce any cry. Indeed, as I learnt after, all the birds in the island were dumb. But there came continually a humming and chirruping of insects, and sudden stirrings and rustlings, as little creatures of the undergrowth took flight.

Our way was entangled with cross-shoots, and the snake-like tendrils of creepers.

"The Doctor would like this ill," said Ambrose, as he lopped a branch off. "I shall warn Barleycorn. 'Tis like to save his life."

"Who is Barleycorn?" asked I.

"He who has't in charge to keep the paths of the woods," said he.

Presently we reached the heart of the wood, which was a tangle of great stalks and creepers in marshy ground. Here plants did grow on the very boughs of the trees having the strangest flowers that ever I saw. For one was in shape like a jug; another like a panakin; others were as monstrous insect-creatures seen in dreams. The trees looked starved and wan. The air was hot and heavy, as in a close sick-chamber.

Soon the wood became clearer and lighter; and, coming presently round a thicket, I spied a glimmering portal of day.

As we emerged, there came a man running. His clothes were ragged and slovenly. He came on, running and panting, like a hunted creature. His face shone with sweat that glistened upon his beard in drops, like dew. His eyes were bright, and roamed about.

Thus he came on directly towards me; and, had I not stepped to one side, he would have run me down. He went on without taking any notice of us.

"He hath been terror-struck," said Ambrose, as I stood staring round on the man. "He was a traitor. 'Twas his punishment."

And he told me the man had tried to escape by night to a merchant-ship that lay off the

island, and that the ghost had appeared to him while he swam in the sea.

The running man was now screened by a promontory of the wood, but his voice sounded intermittently in a sort of shrieking very horrible to hear.

I felt a weight come over me, and a sort of horror of the sunlight.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CLOISTERS. THE DOCTOR AND THE
VOLCAN.

WE went on in silence, through a tract of low level land, void of trees, but clothed with a sort of monstrous tall grasses ; and, having gone about a mile and a half, we came to further woods which skirted the scarps of mountains.

These mountains, or rather high hills, rose not above two hundred feet ; but, on either side, they ranged along almost to the cliff, making, as it were, a spine to the island with their pointed tops. Hard by the woods we had left, run a little swift river, having on its banks many shrubs with scarlet blossoms, the leaves whereof made sunning places for red and blue butterflies.

Thus, for about a mile, the river run to the westward ; to pour itself, through a ferny grotto, into a little lake, a lake scarce larger than one of our English duck-ponds. 'Twas almost circular in shape ; and, being perfectly free from water-plants and clear as crystal, it shone in the sun-glare like a mirror.

We went this way ; and had nigh reached the margin of the lake, when Ambrose, on a sudden, stooped forward on his bended knee upon the ground where a patch of withered moss

appeared like a scab in the tall grasses. Bidding me to stand clear, he reached forth and set his finger upon what I took for a little pebble there. Next moment a square slab opened in the ground, in manner of a trapdoor. 'Twas an iron hatch cunningly masked with moss.

"This," said Ambrose, "is the entry to the Cloisters."

And, stepping to the cavity, he began to descend into it. "Follow!" said he. "Have no fear!"

When he was gotten down sufficiently, I set my foot upon a ladder within the pit; but, when I had descended a good way in the darkness, I saw that the lid above me was slowly shutting down. I cried aloud, supposing that we were entombed; but Ambrose laughed, his shrill voice sounding eerily from below. Next moment, there shone a dazzling light. 'Twas the strange white light which I had known in the stone passage, and it revealed such another passage of stone.

I leaped the remaining steps of the ladder, and followed Ambrose; who, having gone a little way along, opened a door and passed within. He pressed a little knob on the wall, and immediately the place was filled with the white light, but not so bright withal as in the passage. I beheld a great circular chamber of stone; and the painted walls and roof, and the mat of plaited grasses upon the floor, made a harmony of green, very comfortable to the eyes. A cushioned seat, or divan, of green silk ran all

round the wall ; and above it, here and there, were shelves containing books bound in green calf. In the midst, stood three tall tables for standing and writing at.

Ambrose stepped to the divan ; and, opening a drawer beneath, he took out clean parchments. From another drawer, he took parchments covered with writing. The writing was in Latin, roughly scrawled and scarce legible. He set them side by side upon one of the tables, saying :

“This is your task. You must make fair copies of these.”

“And what,” said I, “if I will not ?”

He smiled grimly. “But you will,” said he, “unless, peradventure, you would pass through the door that——”

He broke off, staring with a sudden fear. “I have forgot the sulphur!” said he hoarsely, “Come !”

And he turned, and run from the place.

We came without. Twilight was fallen this while, and the woods looked desolate. Quickly the sky turned violet blue, and the stars rushed out.

“Whither go we ?” said I, as Ambrose led the way through a clump of breadfruit trees.

“To gather sulphur,” said he, “Heaven help me ! I had forgot. Haste ! Let us haste !”

Many bats flew in the shadowy air ; and there came continually a hoarse croaking of frogs, and weird, rat-like voices. Fireflies flitted among the trees, like a slow-fallen snow of fire. On old logs and tree-stumps, blue fire flickered in flying traces.

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Ambrose went so fast that I had much ado to keep up with him.

There was no moon, and the constellations of the stars were abridged with sombre clouds ; but, when we had gone about a mile, the darkness began to be tinged with a faint lurid glow, the air was hot and smelt sulphurous, the vegetation grew sparse and stunted, on a dark hard ground cracked in fissures.

Suddenly the voice of the volcan boomed, like a terrible tocsin in the night. It came from close in front.

We went a little farther ; but, on a sudden, Ambrose clutched hold on my arm. "Hist !" said he in my ear, and drew me behind a curtain of withered trees. He pointed between the branches ; I looked, and what I saw was this :

In an open space, the earth being bare and blasted and black, was a little round hill, dark red in colour, but pink about the top ; in height about fifty feet, and shaped like an inverted bowl. White and pearly vapour ascended from it thinly, in circling wraiths. At the foot thereof stood Doctor Copicus.

He stood motionless, his face towards the volcan. He began to speak.

"I grow liker and liker to thee !" said he, with passion in his shrill voice, "Liker to thy hollow heart ! thy hollow, fiery heart ! . . I, too, am a volcan ! On fire ! On fire ! Waiting !

"That I should be baffled, denied the secret which holds me from my revenge !

"Yet it cannot be for long. A little while,

but a little while, and I shall come at it, I shall find my combustible! Then tremble, thou accursed race! You cast me out! You cast me out! Ha! Your proud cities, your bigot universities, your palaces, the very cottages upon your fields, shall be shattered! shall be shattered! I'll make them like to this place of ashes!"

His voice rose, and quavered, and broke; the strung, tortured note of it sounds even yet in my ears. He shook his clenched fist above him; and, as he turned in the weird light, I saw that his brow was ribbed and stricken like the twisted lava-stones that strewed his path.

He scarce had ended, but another figure—a little lad—appeared from behind the volcan. His face was wild and mazed; his long brown hair fell straggling upon his forehead; his body was thin like a skeleton. He was dressed in the rags and tatters of a seaman's watch-cloak. I knew him: 'twas the little antic lad whom the Englishman had told me of.

He came, stepping trippingly, to the Doctor's side, and said in a shrill voice:

"I heard the Toad shriek, and his golden eggs are rifled!"

The Doctor turned; and, stamping his foot, he asked:

"When was this?"

The lad answered:

"Like a swallow I fly. I saw and I flew."

"Is he 'scaped?" said the Doctor. "Is he tracked? Is the White One out?"

"He is out ! He is out ! and tracking about," cried the lad.

There was silence ; while the antic lad turned, and looked directly towards us. Then he began :

"Two is two, and four is four . . ."

"Away !" said Ambrose in my ear. "Soft ! . . . Now !"

We stole away on tip-toe in the shadow of the blasted trees.

"To the right," said Ambrose in a whisper ; and, as we came upon turfy ground, "Run, soft and swift, for your life !" said he.

And we set off on silent foot, hearkening, in fear and trembling.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PHANTOM VOICE.

THE night was become darker ; we took the darkest ways.

When we had run for about a quarter of an hour, and were come, panting, to the side of a wood, Ambrose stood and hearkened intently. Then he cast himself upon the ground, setting his hand to his heart.

"Do you suffer pain?" asked I.

"Ay," said he, and groaned. "Do not speak to me," added he, with a woful pang. His face was white and drawn, and he kept clutching at the prickly boughs of a bramble bush, tearing the flesh of his hand all bloody.

"What can I do?" said I. "Is there anything I can do?"

"No, no," said he. "It will pass."

I sat down by his side, hearkening dismally to the croaking of the frogs, watching the sombre flying bats.

Suddenly there came a sound of singing. It was that magical high treble voice which had sung before my brother died. Thus it came, small and faint, yet perfectly clear :

He led his little pilgrim band
In thirst and hunger, frost and fire,
Unto a very pleasant land,
Unto a land of heart's desire.

It affected me with a sort of awe; so that, when it ceased, I was as one spell-bound, and could not at first move or speak.

"What is it?" said I. "It came before my brother died."

"Ay," said Ambrose in a quaking voice, "It means death."

"To whom? To you or me?"

"Nay, it is too far off," said he.

"Is't a spirit?" said I.

"Ay," said he, getting to his feet. "Let us be gone."

"Whither?" asked I.

"To the Cells."

As we set off, I asked him why he was so much afraid at the volcan.

"The lad descried us," said he—"did you not see it? If he told the Doctor, we may say good night!"

"Can't we escape?" said I.

"Escape!" said he, "from this island?"

"Why should we not abscond into the woods, near to the shore, and live on fruits and shell-fish, until we could make us a boat?"

"And where would you voyage to in your boat? The nearest land is a hundred miles away."

"We might be taken up," said I.

"A chance in a thousand thousands, and then

by one of the Doctor's ships belike ! You speak as a child."

"Well then," said I desperately, "why should we not abscond into the woods until a ship leaves, and smuggle us away on board of her, and take our chance ?"

"Of being tormented to death," said Ambrose.

I could answer nothing to this ; and I left that discourse, to ask him :

"Is that lad crazy ? The Doctor conversed him as though he was rational."

"The lad is a dæmon, or familiar, of the Doctor," answered Ambrose. "He is, as I may say, super-rational. He hath strange powers. He can see spirits."

"What meant he by saying the Toad was out ?"

"It makes a sort of shrieking sound," said he.

"What do you mean ?" said I. "Is't a wild beast ?"

"I think it's a wild beast of hell," said he. "I know nought of it. The island is full of mysteries. Ask me no more questions. I am sick at heart."

We went a little farther, and then stopped ; for a lamentable and piercing cry was lifted in the night.

"What is it ?" cried I aghast. But Ambrose answered not.

The cry had sounded from in front of us. We began to advance again, but had not gone thirty paces when we heard a sort of gasping sound that came from the side of a thicket in our path.

Hasting thither, we spied the form of a man lying huddled upon the ground.

We bent over him, peering into his face. 'Twas ghastly white, and all twisted to one side as with strong pain. His eyes were shut. Presently they opened, glazed and staring, and we perceived that he was dead.

I looked to see where he was stricken ; but found no hurt upon him.

"Let us be gone," said Ambrose ; and immediately started off.

He went swiftly, but retired into the inward of his mind, so that he returned me no answer when at any time I spoke to him, nor gave any sign that he heard me. So we came, at last, through the second wood, to the entry of the Cells, having met with no man, nor with any further adventure. And, indeed, what we had met withal was enough, for me !

Ambrose opened the great door, pressing a knob beneath the hanging creepers, and we passed in, going straightway to the cell which was allotted to me. There Ambrose set his finger to a little brass button upon the wall, telling me that this would ring a bell in the kitchen. However, he had to ring again before a servant was summoned.

At last he came, rubbing his sleepy eyes. He was a short, thick, swarthy man, dressed cleanly in a shirt and breeches of Indian cotton-stuff. He wore his black moustachios long and curled.

"Supper, Roc," said Ambrose ; and the man made a bow to him, grinning so that his

moustachios did stick up on his face like a ram's horns ; and went swiftly from the cell, without opening his mouth.

I asked Ambrose why the man spoke not ; he told me that he could not, being a mute. I asked whether he was so born. He told me, no, but that his tongue had been cut out for a punishment.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MANUSCRIPTS.

I GOT up betimes on the morrow, being awakened by Ambrose ; and, after breakfast, set out with him for the Cloisters.

The Secretary was very gloomy, and brooded in his mind. Nothing worth remark fell out on the way, until we came to the second wood, when, pointing to the right, Ambrose said :

"I ought to have told you : you see that region of the wood ? 'tis forbidden ground. The Doctor will have none go there ; and woe to the man who disobeyeth him ! I may tell you," added he, "that a deadly swamp is there."

I was silent for a moment ; then I asked him :

"Is nothing there besides the swamp ?"

"I do not know," said he, looking at me strangely ; and turned his head away.

We came to the trapdoor in the tall grasses ; and, having descended and entered into the subterraneous hall, we set to work with the manuscripts. The script I had to make a fair copy of, was a treatise of philosophical ideas, being disposed in many several essays. The matter was profound, the style plain and perspicuous. I took these extracts following :—

(1) *The body is the shadow of the soul. It is but the state, or medium, whereby immature souls know and are known of one another.*

They that judge after the appearance, do take the creatures of the material universe for the products and progeny thereof. Yet it, indeed, is the product and progeny of them—if a mere shadow (which only it is) may rightly be so called. For the material universe, the sum and crasis of bodies, is the shadow cast by the spiritual universe, the sum and crasis of souls. It's a picture cast upon the curtain of the darkness, as when the sun, shining through a coloured casement, throws a picture upon a wall. And that which doth limn out this picture of the material universe, is (as it were) the coloured casement of minds and experiences; the light whereof proceedeth from the Deity, wherein all live and move and have their being. Wherein, rather, all sleep, or sleeping, dream; or dreaming, fitfully awake.

Yet this aggregate of minds and experiences, that casts the shadow and maketh the picture, is not the reasoning nor the sensible nor the carnal part, but is that elemental region and those abyssms of being plumbing deep as the souls of plants and stones and underlying in men and animals the conscious part. As to the other regions—the provinces of human reason and feeling and contemplation—these, too, do picture forth; sometimes, in gleams and glimpses, they pourtray images of heaven; sometimes, darkly and distortingly, they conjure up visions of hell.

(2) *God is the only power, principle, and reality.*

*All else is but emptiness and distortion and shadow.
If He should withdraw himself, the universe
would disappear, and leave not a rack behind.*

*The universe, in sooth, may be likened to a prism,
having many facets, revealing God. Love is the
light thereof, and is gathered by affinities betwixt
persons, and shineth in many coloured traits. He,
therefore, that loveth man with understanding,
also loveth God; and his love shall increase. But
he that loveth dotingly, and without understanding,
is an idolater; and his love is like to a candle set
up in a deep cavern: presently there shall be
darkness.*

Ambrose wrought at a manuscript of poesy,
which he embellished in colour with strange and
beautiful pictures. As he wrought, he became
lost and out of himself; and, if I spoke to him,
he was angry.

I took a copy of this poem following:—

Once I built a palace
Far from any land,
Far from any ship-way:
'Twas most grim and grand.

Glass I had for sunlight,
Coloured glass for blinds,
Glass to garner sunshine
'Gainst the wintry winds.

'Twas most grim and quiet,
'Twas most grand and free:
Sky-blue glass, or star-blue;
Glass and sky and sea.

Gone ! all gone for ever !
Wander homeless man !
Came that crooked serpent,
Came Leviathan !

Smote my pleasure-palace,
Whirled in flashing foam,
Split in stars of crystal,
Floor and walls and dome !

Ambrose told me 'twas written by the Doctor
in his youth.

Thus the morning passed ; and, at midday, we
left the Cloisters to return to the Cells.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE GLORIOUS PIRATE.

ON our way, as we entered the first wood, we came upon the man Barleycorn, who trimmed the path with a machete. He was a small hairy man, bowed with toil and parched in the sun. He was a man of few words (as the saying is). Ambrose passed him the time of day, and he did but nod his head, as he lopped off a tree-shoot; and, when I asked him pleasantly if his work liked him, he merely winked at me with his eye.

As we stood by him, another approached through the wood. This was a great topping pirate, dressed in sky-blue clothes, with scarlet and green feathers in his hat. He did shine all glorious in the sun with his silver buttons, rings, pendants, bracelets, brooch, and buckle to his belt. He came swearing, as the lapels of his coat caught in the thicket; and, having drawn near, he dealt Barleycorn a kick with his foot, asking "Why the devil he kept not a better gang-way?"

The poor man rolled under a bush, and lay rubbing himself, with a rueful look on his wizened countenance. Then he got up, and fell to work again, saying meekly:

"Never be treading on old Barleycorn, mate. The poor old fellow's got his work to do."

This made me laugh ; and the pirate said :

"All's well, old fellow. If this here was Port Royal, I'd physic your bruise with the right tippie. But there, it a'n't !"

"No," said Ambrose, "there's no taverns here for you."

"I'll speak nothing against the Doctor," said the pirate, "but 'tis a thirsty soil an' thirsty toil, and I wants my tippie. Water's well enough for wild Indians, but..." He broke off, fetching a deep sigh.

"You mean to say—" began Ambrose ; but the other took him up short, saying fiercely :

"Belay with putting words in my mouth ! What I means to say, and what I don't mean to say, a'n't none of your business. Belike you'd be bearing tales to the Doctor !"

"Nay," said Ambrose ; "you should know me better than to say so."

The other was as easily pacified as before he had been incensed. "All's well," said he, "I'll treat you, too—in Port Royal."

"How goes the work ?" asked Ambrose.

"The ship work ?" cried the pirate. "Trust me not, if I a'n't dog-sick of it ! The blasting work of haling the King's ship ashore, above the tide mark !"

"Have you careened her ?" said Ambrose.

"Ay, 'tis done, praise the Saints !"

"What's next to do ?"

"Why, haven't you heard ? We're to set to

work with the carpenters to build another King's ship. John Rance hath his orders."

"Indeed!" said Ambrose, much astonished.

"Ay, indeed! And pretty work we're like to have with it!"

"I marvel what the Doctor hath in mind," said Ambrose. "You do not know, do you?"

"No, by Saint Marta!" answered he, crossing himself. "The Doctor's intents and purposes are above us seamen. We a'n't for to think; we've got our work to do, like old Barleycorn there. Say, old fellow!" cried he, "bring to for another kick!"

But the forester merely grumbled, as he plied his machete further along the path.

"But who's this brave young gentleman?" said the pirate, turning to me. "How do you do, mister?" (holding his hand out), "My name's Jack Rodgers."

I took the great hard hand, with a fit remark.

"You come in the King's ship, didn't you?" asked he.

"Ay," said I.

"I thought you did," said he. "Well, I must weigh. Fare you well, Mr. Clayton. Fare you well, Mr. Ambrose."

And with this, doffing his hat to us, and bowing with a handsome congee, he went his way. Presently we heard him swearing, as his coat caught in the thicket.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HEY-DIDDLE-DIDDLE !

WE came to the Cells ; where Ambrose took me into a cell just within the passage.

I was startled, and stood perfectly astonished on the threshold ; for the walls were all carved out in figures of beautiful sculpture. The subject was religious, depicting the martyrdoms of Christian saints. But oh profanity ! all prominent among those august visages, was the sculptured head of Doctor Copicus !

Ambrose observed my admiration well pleased, and seemed to forget his gloom.

“ You wrought these works ? ” asked I.

“ Ay,” said he, “ I wrought them. ’Tis my talent, my delight . . . I love beauty overmuch . . . overmuch,” he added heavily. “ It obscures religion in me. I am taken with the shape and outward form. . . And yet that shape and outward form is inherent in the Soul. And yet I know, thanks to the Doctor, I know and understand, that all is of the Soul.”

“ What mean you by the *Soul* ? ” asked I.

“ The Soul,” said he, “ is the All-pervading, All-constituting, All-loving power and substance, in whom all souls do live and move and have their being.”

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"Thus spake the Doctor," said I scoffing.

But Ambrose answered nothing.

"A seër, a prophet!" quoth I. "A just man and a merciful! How many thousands of poor mariners, pray, hath this righteous preacher slain?"

Ambrose smote his forehead. "Have a care!" said he, "What did I tell you? If the Doctor heard you——"

"Oh, but you tempt me!" cried I, "You tempt me! What! would you have me to believe that this pirate chief, this murderer——"

I broke off; for the door of the cell was thrown violently open, and there entered, bursting in upon us, the little lad whom we had seen near the volcan.

"Tirralirra!" cried he in his shrill voice, and stood stock and silent before us. I looked at Ambrose, who stared on the lad.

"Well, Dominic?" said he in a quavering voice.

The lad fell to capering about the cell. His eyes glowed like lamps; and, on a sudden, he cried:

"The mighty from their seats! the mighty from their seats! Death is a pendulum! Death is a swing! Up—down! See—saw! It pulls down the mighty from their seats, and exalteth the humble and meek! The clown is up and the king down, hey-diddle-diddle for king and clown!"

And, stepping to Ambrose, he put a slip of paper in his hands.

Ambrose looked on it.

"After twenty days," said he quietly. "After twenty days I die."

I looked upon the parchment ; thereon, in fierce scrawled characters, was writ :

Post Viginti Dies.

"Why, what is this ?" said I.

"The mandate of the Doctor. Because I fetched not his sulphur," said Ambrose.

"Tirralirra !" cried the lad, and, with a hop and a skip, sped from the cell.

Ambrose sat silent, his haggard gaze bent upon the floor ; and I also was silent. At length he spoke.

"Nay, but I am weary," said he, "weary of it all . . . Over the rocks, over the flinty rocks, have lain all the courses of my life . . . Always uneasy ! . . Miserable ! . . Tormented ! tormented ! But, when the Doctor revealed to me the hidden truth, then came joy unto my soul. No longer tormented with those dark and hideous thoughts, no longer plunged in deep-down gulfs of terror and despair.

"Let him, then, kill my body, since he hath given life unto my soul ! Ay, let him kill me, for I am a-weary ! a-weary !"

CHAPTER XXIV.

A CURSE FALLS UPON THE WOLVES.

I PARTED from him, to go to my cell. Later, before dusk fell, I went out to take an evening jaunt, betaking myself to the cliff.

At the fortifications I stood to watch divers men who cleaned the great guns.

They were Frenchmen, and chattered over their work, with much gesticulation. I spoke to them ; but they would not be troubled with me, and returned me no answer. So I left them, to go my way.

I rambled on along the cliff about half an hour without observing anything remarkable ; and was going about to return, when, on a sudden, I heard a sound of branches shaken in a little thicket that skirted my path, and, to my great joy, beheld Thalass, the Mosquito Indian.

And, for his part, the faithful, affectionate creature was so rejoiced to see me, that he knew not how to express it sufficiently, casting himself flat at my feet, or embracing me with a thousand extravagant antics. Hereafter he wended beside me along the cliff. But, on a sudden, he came to a stand, looking fixedly to the sea-board.

He turned ; and, plucking my arm, pointed to

the horizon. I looked, straining my sight to have made out what he descried ; but I could not. He told me it was the topsails of a ship.

This put me in a ferment to know what manner of ship it was : a King's ship, I hoped ; but doubted she would prove to be but a vessel of the pirates returning home. However, the wind coming briskly to the shore, and the ship bearing directly in, soon I descried her. But now the shades of night began to fall, so that she was no longer visible to us. On this we turned, and started back along the cliff.

As we drew near to the fortifications, there came a sound of voices ; and soon we beheld a gang of pirates gathered about the guns. A small man, having a scarlet feather stuck in his hat, stood a little apart from the rest. He beckoned to Thalass, who went to him. But I, bethinking me of Ambrose, and of how the news of this coming of a ship might avail to distract his melancholy thoughts, determined to go to him.

Accordingly I took the path of the woods, following it to the Cells. I found the knob beneath the creepers, and tried to open the door ; but I could not. Thereupon I cast about for a stone, to have knocked upon the door with it. Whilst I did so, there came the dull booming of cannonading out at sea. It ceased ; then, like a dread answer, the volcan roared loud and long. Presently the cannonading began again.

This made me mighty eager to learn what these cannon-shots might mean. I was willing,

also, to find out what was doing at the fortifications. Accordingly I gave over trying to open the door, and started back to the cliff; the cannonading, meanwhile, being continued. The heavens were splendid with the hosts of the stars; the moon was not yet risen.

I reached the outward of the wood, and looked keenly forth upon the fortifications. They were full of men; and every gunner was plainly to be distinguished by a point of yellow flame that shone at the end of his linstock. But there came no longer a sound of voices, and at that I wondered; until I spied the form of Doctor Copicus.

He stood at the nearer end of the battery, looking out to the sea-board; and his tall, bowed figure, dressed in the scarlet robe, upon which his white locks fell glistening, had an eldritch look in the starlight.

I stepped boldly forth, and took my station by his side. He turned on my approach, and I saw that his face was all alight with excitement, like an eager child's. But he said nought to me.

I looked upon the starlit sea, and was amazed. For, instead of one ship, as I had expected, there were four; and three were in chase of the other. The pursuers sailed almost abreast of one another, were close upon their quarry, and kept firing at her. The ships were about a mile and a half from the shore. None had any flag abroad. Thus they came on straight under the fortifications.

Suddenly the Doctor turned, and spoke to me.

"See you my little lamb?" said he soft and low, "See you my little lamb pursued by wolves? Do you not weep? Doth not your heart burn within you to behold this thing? But is there none to help? Must I, then, stand by to see my children devoured by ravenous beasts?"

And suddenly plucking hold on my shoulder, he turned about, and strode on before the fortifications, drawing me after him.

"Ho! Benedict," cried he to the master-gunner, "here's a little lad come to see our pretty things, our wondrous toys, our popguns! Show him how they shoot, Benedict! Let him see them hit a mark, Benedict!"

The small man grinned with his teeth, and shouted an order; there fell a stir and business and a *clang, clang, clang* of metal.

It ceased, and there was silence—for no sound of cannonading came from the ships at sea.

The small man passed his gaze along the line; then "*Fire!*" cried he.

There was a crash and a roar. To me it seemed the very earth did split, and quake and stagger. Stunned, I fell to the ground.

The Doctor himself raised me up, and, "See! See!" cried he, pointing out beneath the lifting cannon-smoke, "a curse is fallen upon the wolves! They die! they die! They go down! down! There shall not a one of them escape!"

The ship that had been pursued sailed slowly in, and I could see the men crowding in the bows, waving scarfs to us, and, doubtless, cheering.

But of the other craft, there remained but a confused wrack driving in the waves, swarmed over with struggling seamen, as with rats.

I turned from the spectacle, sick at heart. I knew not, and I know not to this day, what the murdered men were—whether pirates or honest merchantmen ; but the fact of that disaster smote upon me like a private calamity.

I returned to the Cells ; and, contriving this time to open the door, passed within and made my way to Ambrose's chamber.

The poor man sat as I had left him, sunk into a dull dejection, so that he scarce took any notice of my entering in. I told him what had befallen ; but he merely said :

“ That's the *Vandal*, I suppose, come home.”

“ She had a stormy home-coming then,” said I.

“ Ay,” said he.

“ What were the other ships, I wonder,” said I. But he returned me no answer.

CHAPTER XXV.

A GAUDY PICTURE IN A DARK FRAME.

THE common sort of pirates had their dwelling both in the Cells, and in a system of caves, in part natural, in part excavated out of the cliff, on the further shore of the island.

The Doctor had both a cell and a cave, sometimes taking up his abode in one, sometimes in the other. Adjacent to his cell, was his laboratory, which was described sufficiently by the Englishman in his narrative.

As concerning the Caves, I was never in them, nor so much as set eyes on them in all my sojourn on the island ; being kept pretty busy from day to day with Ambrose in the Cloisters. On this account, also, I can tell you nothing of the ship-building which went on at the other side of the island. But, as that topping pirate told us, they built the ship on the pattern of the *Tiger* ; wherein doth appear the main of the Doctor's intent in enticing us to the island. And what we overheard him say at the volcan, as to the hatred he had for some nation, and his search for a combustible, may hint us he designed to cruise upon that nation, and with that combustible (when it was found), to destroy it.

Further, as I surmise, that nation was none other than England.

But leaving this in the midst, I continue my relation.

Looking down from the cliff, then, on the morning after the destruction of the four ships, as I wended with Ambrose to the Cloisters, I spied the pirate ship lying at an anchor close in ; and her longboat, heavy laden, was being rowed to the shore, to a point where some six or seven pirates stood ready to unlade her. But of the shipwracks there was never a trace.

Returning at midday, we fell in on the cliff with Surgeon Burke. He stood in converse with the surgeon of the pirate ship, and introduced me to him. I, in return, introduced Ambrose : we might have been at a country ball, there was such a ducking and bowing and doffing of hats !

When the last "Your servant, sir" had been spoken, I asked the pirate surgeon whether his voyage had prospered. He answered grimly that they had gotten more blood than purchase ; whereupon Burke clapt him on the shoulder for a "jolly leg and joint-carver for Jack Shark."

"But come, Frank," says Burke, turning to me and crooking his arm in mine, "come you for a jaunt with me. It's long since we had sweet converse, you and I ; and Mr. Ambrose, I'll warrant, will not be hard hearted enough to withhold ye !"

"Nay," says Ambrose, "you may take your jaunt for me."

"Give me leave," hereupon thrust in the pirate,

and would have taken my other arm ; but I stepped on one side and put him off : whereupon he laid hold on Burke instead.

Now, it was evident that Burke was willing to converse me in private, and wanted none of the other ; yet he was so nice and genial by nature, that to tell the man plainly so, he would not, but must be still mincing the matter, throwing out one glancing hint or another, which upon the tough hide of the pirate proved but glancing indeed.

But I, who could not away with such trifling, put a period to it presently.

"Mr. Harper," says I (for such was the pirate's name), "*Two are company, three are none.* 'Tis an old saying."

He stared at me ; then he flared up.

"What mean you by that, you prating fool ?" cried he.

"I mean," quoth I, "since you're so dull, that your room is better than your company."

On that he drew his hanger and made a pass on me ; but I, too, could sail on that course : not for nothing had I wrought at Clayton Manor, and learnt to hold a foil under one of the cunningest swordsmen of Italy. I stepped swiftly aside, and drew my rapier ; and, as sword and pirate came blundering by me, I caught the one a tricky turn beneath the haft, so that it sped hurtling in the air, and gave the other so shrewd a taste of rapier-point as set him howling.

He recovered himself ; and, firing off a volley of threats and imprecations at me, turned

furiously, and cast about for his hanger. It was fallen, however, into a cane-brake. . . We left him to fish it out as best he could, and parted from him, not without laughter. I doubt not, he wished he had his pistols.

"'Twas jolly sport," cried I, giving him a parting shot. "Another day we'll to't again!"

And Burke, who had got over his queasiness, added:

"As good as quoits, i' faith!" and bent double with a laughter-fit.

Indeed, we were gotten quite out of sight of the pirate ere Burke ceased to make merry over him. Burke was ever inclined to hilarity; but never, methought, so high as this. As we swung along arm in arm, and taking no heed of the way, he began to tell me many a merry tale and many a jolly jest. But sure his jollity was a malignant jollity, an elfin intoxication. . .

The island was most witchingly beautiful, the woodland being a harmony of green and gold, a chequer-work of mellow light and flashing arcs; whilst golden shadows waved, and jewelled motes danced in the shade of the bowering trees.

Of all the merry japes that Burke told me then, but one remains in my memory, like a gaudy picture in a dark frame. It was the last jest he was to make in this world.

"Did ever I tell you, Frank," said he, "of old John Baluster and the fun we had with him when I was a boy? No? Well, this Baluster, you must know, was a miserly flint of a man, and

withal as guzzling and greedy as a cardinal. He contrived to stuff his paunch, and husband his moneybags, by quartering himself upon his acquaintances—friends he had none; and kept flitting from one easy-going soul to another of such as would suffer him.

“Of these was my father; a country doctor he, but one more busied with his garden, his plum trees, his dahlias, his roses, than with the sick, of which (to speak sooth), he dealt with but a few, and of that few (dear man), killed as many as he cured.

“Well, on a day when Baluster was thus battenning upon us, having already stayed above a month, my brother Dirk and I resolved, by fair means or foul, to fire him out from thence.

“We stole into the parlour, where ’twas his custom of an afternoon to snore off the surfeits of his midday meal. There of a surety lay John, a tunbelly of a man, a weary burden for my mother’s dainty settee. His bald pate was covered about with a crimson scarf (Lord! I can see him now); his vast mouth sagged open like a cod’s, the horrible sound that issued therefrom frightened off the flies.

“For a space we stood, Dirk and I, looking on him; then stole up; and, betwixt those cavernous jaws, each, one after t’other, did empty a black draught!

“We did this thing again on the next day; and on the next we gave him the equal of three black draughts!

“A change came over John Baluster. He

lost great part of his equanimity. He became a trouble to my father: followed him about, a consulting importunity. My father administered unto him many various drugs; my father bled him. Meanwhile, by some device or other contrived by Dirk and me, he never wanted for his black draughts. He had tendance enough!

"At last he took a notion that some one of the servants was poisoning him, had his trunk packed the self-same day, and departed."

Burke ended with loud laughter, in which, I joined; for he had a droll, dry manner of telling a tale. Also I had contracted this while much of his outrageous jollity. Hereafter, as though spent with such laughter, we fell silent.

But, it seemed to me, that upon the woods, also, a silence fell, and a shadow and a fear. I looked up; but the sky was deep blue, and no cloud obscured the sun.

Suddenly we came to a stop. There had come a sound of singing in the woods, and the voice that sang was that unearthly, magical high treble!

And thus it was:

The whole heart is sick,
And the whole life is weary:
There rides an island in the central sea.
Lord of the island,
Lo! the Magician;
He knows the secret,
He hath the key.

"What is it?" cried Burke. "Where is it?"

Hereupon he set off running in the direction whence the singing had appeared to come. I

followed ; but I run lurching to this side and that like a drunken man.

We came within a thick wood. Suddenly I, who had taken no thought of the way hitherto, espied close at hand a curious triad of palm trees which I remembered to have seen before.

I thought swiftly as I went, asking myself where I had seen those trees, and the answer was borne in upon my mind with a gush of fear : I remarked them in my second passing with Ambrose through the second wood, and they stood in that region of the wood which he had warned me against venturing into !

I hallooed to Burke, who was gotten some way in advance of me. "Come back !" cried I, "Come back !"

But too late !

For, having found his way obstructed by a sort of hedge, or clump, of mangrove roots, he had leapt over it ; and his voice came to me in a note of fear.

"Help !" cried he, "I sink ! Climb the hedge . . . Nay, cut a stick and hold it forth to me. Haste ! Haste !"

I spied a strong sapling, whipped out my knife, and cut it through. With this in my hand, I mounted to a fork in the hedge, and looked over.

There lay a tract of flat ground, all grown over with shimmering green and yellow moss and mottled with lichen and fungi, which stretched away to tall reeds, and thence to woods. A mist hung over it, and a cloud of buzzing

insects. On the marge stood Burke sunk to his thighs in ooze, and sinking still. His face, as he turned it towards me, was drawn and grey, and moist with the sweat of fear.

Staying myself upon the fork, I held the sapling forth to him. He clutched it, and I pulled away ; but, though I used my utmost endeavours, straining to the last bent, I could not hale him out : the morass held him like a live thing.

Indeed, my efforts did but hasten his fate ; for, when, my strength being spent, I desisted, it began to suck him in faster than before. At length I yielded the attempt.

Thereupon Burke bethought him to cast himself flat, that his body might offer the greater obstruction to the swamp ; but it was too late : he was sunk too deep.

At last he ceased to struggle, and yielded himself for lost ; and, conquering his terror as well as he could, he entrusted to me certain charges in respect of his wife and child, to enact if ever I should return to England. He died bravely, committing his spirit unto God.

But this dreadful passage wrought a strange effect in me. It filled me full of anger against Doctor Copicus and all his works. As I gazed upon the morass, which lay all shimmering and steaming in the sun-glare, I swore that I would bring the man to the bar of justice and judgment.

I stood there in the dank wood, in the dismal shade of the mangrove trees, and I raged—I, a weak, futile lad—against the man whose might was like a strong tower. And suddenly, as though

deriding me, the voice of the volcan roared in thunder...

It came into my mind that the volcan was a demoniac creature of the Doctor enforcing and bodying forth his power ; and, on the thought, I shook my clenched fist towards the place where it stood concealed.

But, ah, if I had but *known* !

* * * *

It was becoming late ; so I turned, and set off, wending slowly and heavily, to the Cells.

As I came forth from the wood, I spied divers of our men gathered together in talk, lying sprawling upon the cliff ; and, coasting over to them, I sat down in the midst, and began to question them upon their lot in the island, and how it liked them. For I was willing to learn whether there might be any possibility of banding them together in a venture against the Doctor.

It appeared, however, that they were all well content with the new state of things, and to consort with the pirates.

Nay, they looked eagerly forward to go out on the account (as the saying is), and to take part in many a brave carouse at Caraccas or at Port Royal.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

THE TREASURE CHAMBER.

THERE passed some sixteen days, in which happened nothing remarkable ; nor learnt I in that time anything more of the mysteries of the island.

Ambrose could, or would, tell me nothing. Indeed, he was become so taciturn and out of humour, that scarce he spoke to me ever at all. And then came the day when I hit upon the secret path over the morass.

That there was such a path, and that it conducted to something remarkable, I had from the first received a persuasion. But though, in several visits to the morass, I had sounded the marge of it well nigh all round (in compass about six miles), I could never come at it.

And no wonder ! For thus the thing was revealed to me :

I had come to the place in the afternoon of that day (of a morning I still wrought in the Cloisters), and was working along in a maze of mangrove trees, when close by me a young kid leapt from the wood, and went bounding along upon the morass as if upon perfectly firm ground. I was surprised ; but, when I thrust my stick upon the slough at the point where I thought

the creature lighted, and the ground did yield as soft as anywhere else, I stood like one perfectly dumbfounded.

However, I essayed again, thrusting a little farther forth, and this time found firm solid ground. I tried to the right hand and to the left, but in both places found swamp.

Here, at this very point, then, began the secret path across the morass. But what a piece of cunning it was! Or rather, perhaps, how wondrous was nature's cunning herein subservient to man's!

However, I stayed not to wonder; but, having looked carefully round to make sure that none was near, sprang boldly forth upon the path, and began warily to tread it, feeling out before me with my staff. It held good, and I came safe to the other side where thick fern-trees grew in the skirts of woods.

Setting up my staff to mark the place, I entered the woods, coming soon to a delicious little green hollow. The ground was glossy green moss; in the midst it was all withered in a square piece.

"O-ho!" said I, looking on it, "I know, I think, what this means!" For I recalled the withered patch of moss above the Cloisters. And, stooping down, I felt about the roots of it.

It proved as I expected: the moss adhered to the iron lid of a trapdoor.

I found the spring, and pressed it; and the contrivance slowly opened. Now, during my stay on the island, I had furnished myself with,

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and carried always about with me, the material for contriving matches, namely : a good length of dead cocoa-fibre steeped in oil and dried in the sun. Accordingly, having cut a stick and broken it in twain, I bound some of my fibre about the ends of both pieces. I set one of my matches upright in the pocket of my coat, lest I should want it ; and, having kindled the other with my flint and steel, I held it down into the pit.

The match burnt brightly, which told me the air was wholesome ; so I set my foot upon the ladder within, and, having the lighted match in my hand, began to descend.

I reached the base ; to find myself in a great well, or cylindrical shaft, the walls of which were clay hardened with fire. I looked for a tunnel, or passage leading off from the place ; but in vain. I was in the act of mounting the ladder, in despair of making any discovery, when I spied a tiny knob of brass on the wall. To this I set my finger, and pressed it. Immediately a door flew open in the wall, revealing the dark arched orifice of a passage.

I ventured within. My matchlight shone flickering upon bare clay walls at first ; but, when I was gotten a little way, I near dropped the torch, startled at what I suddenly beheld.

For, heaped up in a medley before me, was a great vast treasure. Candlesticks and flagons and jewelled sword-hilts, and plate and bars of gold, half sunk in jewels without number and without price : some of them being set in beautiful ornaments, but the most part loose,

and many uncut and unpolished as they had been taken up out of the earth.

I stood at gaze, whilst diamonds, opals, and emeralds gleamed and flashed in the matchlight, like rainbowed lightning. Suddenly a dreadful fear seized hold on me, and I dropped the match, which flickered for a moment and went out: a ghostly, clucking laughter had sounded through the passage!

For a moment there was silence, while I stood quaking; and then I knew who was with me in that secret place.

"Are you, then, come as a robber?" came the mocking voice of Doctor Copicus. "Would'st despoil me of my wretched dole, the scanty savings and substance of my old age? What! shall the young tread down the aged, the strong and lusty trample upon the infirm?"

"I have taken nothing," said I in a quavering voice.

"So. And are they worth taking, think you?"

I answered that it was an incalculable treasure.

"So. And what could it buy you?" said he, "Love, wisdom, freedom, power?"

I replied that it could buy none of these.

"What then? I'll tell you: *Shadows!* Houses and lands—*shadow!* luxury—*shadow!* domination—*shadow!* *Shadows! shadows! shadows!* Vanity, trouble, and vexation of spirit! Set your heart on shadow, and become shadow . . . I tell you, my lad," added he, with passion in his voice and deep despair, "I tell you, that if . . ."

He ceased, and there was silence ; a hollow and throbbing silence, like the pulse of the darkness.

Then the Doctor spoke again. "How came you here ?" said he.

I told him how I had found the path across the morass.

"It remains," said he, "for you to die . . . And yet . . ."

He touched a knob upon the wall ; and immediately my sight was dazzled with the bright white light, which flooded the passage.

"Come forth !" said the Doctor.

I obeyed, trembling, and stood with him in the cylindrical chamber. I looked up ; and the great, white, rugged face came into my vision, and filled it. But I could not endure his piercing gaze, which searched into my soul.

"I am not willing to have you put to death," said he at last. "Nay, look on me ! Lo, your life is in my hands, and I spare it ! You have transgressed my weightiest command, and I pardon you ! Only swear to me, that you will not divulge to any man the secret of the path, nor throw out the slightest hint as to the treasure !"

"I pass my word on it," said I, looking him in the face.

"So. I will set my shining mark upon you."

He took from an inner pocket of his robe a tiny box wrought out of a single ouch of emerald ; and, having opened it, he dipped his finger within, and strook it on me, from my chin and jowl round to the back of my neck.

"Get you gone," said he, "and return no more!"

And he looked upon me terribly, and pointed to the trapdoor.

I stepped to the ladder, and began to climb. I was amazed; my thoughts run in a whirl. The power of the man's personality overshadowed me. One thing alone I perceived: I had found favour in his sight. But, with the thought, came another. I would build upon that favour to make intercession for Ambrose. I stayed my ascent, and looked down. Doctor Copicus stood observing me; and there was a strange, lamentable look in his eyes.

"Sir," said I, "I would speak with you . . ."

"Well?" asked he, as I stopped.

"Ambrose, your Secretary . . ." I began, and stuck again.

"Well?" said he. "What of Ambrose?"

"Spare him——"

I broke off; for my heart died at the terrors of his aspect, at the fearful anger that suddenly blazed in his eyes.

"Begone!" cried he. And I threw myself up the remaining steps of the ladder, and staggered out into the wood.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FRANCIS FINDS HIS BROTHER'S WATCH.

NIGHT had fallen this while, and the hollow in the thicket was black as pitch. I groped my way forth, and, coming to the verge of the swamp, searched for and found my stick that I had set up there. Hereupon I stood and looked about me, dazed and trembling.

The air was thick and foetid with the mist from the swamp. The heavens were overcast with black clouds. Two shadowy night birds flew continually in wavering and interlacing curves. A sort of rat-like creatures scuttled in and out the woods. A loud screeching cry, having a strange vicious note in it, thrust in every now and again upon the continual croaking of frogs. It was borne in upon my mind, with terror, that this was the voice of the Toad.

From the back of me came the murmuring sound of the sea. Suddenly the moon appeared betwixt ragged clouds, casting a livid light upon the misty surface of the morass, and vanished.

In the daytime, in the warmth and light of the sun, I cared little for the ghostly mysteries of the island. I said that the Thing which had frightened us on the ship—the dreadful ghostly figure—had nothing spectral in it, but was

contrived, after some wondrous manner, by Doctor Copicus. But here, at night, in this weird and desolate situation, my boldness proved to be but a daylight boldness.

What, I asked myself, if the Thing should arise before me here and now? What was that screeching cry?

I took thought which way to go. It were a drear thing to cross the morass in the dark. What then?

I must, at all adventures, act, and act quickly, or a panic terror would come upon me.

But whilst I stood thus in doubt, the voice of the sea came to me: and, turning that way, I thrust desperately in amongst the woods. They were dark and dank like a cavern. Unknown creatures started at my feet, uttering weird cries. They were full of bats, which fluttered about my head; and something winged and heavy darted up from the undergrowth and tore and bit at my face!

Perchance it was but a flying fox; but I screamed with fright. I tore the thing from me, and dashed myself headlong through the thick covert. You may call me a craven; but, on coming forth from that wood, I sobbed like a terrified child!

I proceeded, wading and staggering through tall reeds matted with creepers.

'Twas a desolate situation; and, as I went staggering on through the reeds, I looked this way and that, fearful of beholding the face of some dreadful devil.

It seemed to me, that unearthly things did peer at me upon every side. I fought against the frenzy of my fear. Suddenly I caught the sound of a rustling in the tall grasses at the back of me. I drew my rapier, and stood, looking back, hearkening intently ; but could hear it no more.

I strove to persuade myself that 'twas but an alarum of my fluttering heart, and continued on my way. But presently it came again, and louder, doubtful no longer, but a sure token that someone or something did follow me.

At last, being able no longer to endure the suspense, I turned ; and, casting away my stick, with my drawn sword in my hand, I began to move that way.

I had not gone a dozen paces, but I beheld the form of an Indian, who crouched in the reeds. He had a deadly blow-pipe in his hand. I was ready to have fallen upon him with my rapier. But, on a sudden (seeing, I suppose, the Doctor's mark upon me), he turned and betook himself off, running swiftly ; and so disappeared in the darkness. In the same moment, I heard something fall amongst the reeds.

Stepping to the place, I sought for it, and found it. It was a gold watch, and on the back thereof was graven the arms of my house ; I knew it to have been my brother's !

Now, since it had been let slip by the Indian, he it was, in all probability, who had murdered my brother ; the sense whereof stirred a lust of vengeance in me, supplanting my late terror, and

I would have essayed to have followed that Indian. However, I soon perceived I would have been quite frustrate.

Accordingly, I turned and prosecuted my way, reaching the cliff at last, and descending to the shore, by way of a gully.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GHOST FACE.

THE tide was at ebb ; but I walked down the shore until I could see, faint and ashen, the curled crests of the breakers and the foam writhing upon the sand. I began to make along to the northward.

There came a flash of lightning glimmering upon the face of the high cliff. It was followed a little after by another, a blinding flash ; and so continued intermittent. Presently a sort of hoarse rolling sound came to me above the clamour of the breakers. It waxed louder as I proceeded, and soon I knew what it was : the sound of waters falling from a blow-hole high up on the lofty cliff.

But, as I drew nearer, for the fourth time that night terror laid hold on me. For, as a flash of lightning fell upon the waterfall, *from above it there looked forth that frightful visage which had struck terror to the heart of every man on board the "Tiger" !*

I beheld the thing but for a moment ; yet the horror of it was more than I could bear. A dizziness came over me, and I sank down in a swoond.

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It was early morning when I came to myself. A tumultuous and thundrous sound was in my ears. It was the clamour of the great waterfall, joined with the roaring of the sea.

A wind was sprung up, a high and rocking wind, that came in flurries, and swept round and round and in and out the bends and indentations of the cliff, to leap howling upon the giant headland. The sea, risen high upon the shore, gnashed and foamed in great breakers. But the sky was cloudless blue, and the firmament clear like crystal.

My face was wet with the flying scud; my clothes had dried upon me. I felt fresh and vigorous, as after deep sleep. I lay recalling the grisly happenings of the night; and, on the thought of the ghost face, a shadow and a chill came over me—yea, even in the warmth and light of the sun!

Yet, on a sudden, I took another kind of thought. Getting to my feet, I looked directly upon the cliff above the waterfall, and there was the face—ay, even as I expected! For now I knew what it really was: *a sculptured face, vast and horrible, hewed out of the rock!*

Yet even so, scarce I could bear to look upon it. It was vast; it was prodigious; it was a hellish thing! Never hideous gargoyle, never infernal ghost, or chimera seen in dreams, looked with an aspect so frightful and malign!

Who, I wondered, had conceived it, and whose hand had wrought it? And immediately I remembered those wondrous works of sculpture

on the walls of Ambrose's cell. Ambrose was the man!

This, then, was what had scared us on board the ship near out of our wits, and, no doubt, many another ship's company besides; a sculptured face, the phantasm of a mind diseased, a nightmare made stone! And, by the same token, I perceived, what we had taken for flowing white robes of the figure *was nothing else but flowing water, the water falling from the blow-hole beneath the visage from the high cliff.*

As to the illumination, that did not stumble me. I had made it my play-game often, when a child, to cast a light reflected on a mirror; so an arc of the strange white light,* cast upon a mirror, and reflected upon the face and falling water, might well have served to create that ghostly appearance.

But where was the mirror? There was a cave near by; I stepped to it, and entered in. 'Twas deep and dark; but I felt about the walls of it, and sure enough found the mirror. It stood set up against the rock, wrapped in a canvas case.

Thus, then, the great mystery stood revealed. A chance, albeit a wondrous chance, had unmasked the trickery; for, if the lightning had not fallen, as it did, directly upon the face, and in that very moment of time, 'tis a thousand to one

* How this white light was contrived I never could learn. (Original footnote.)

Perhaps by means of a radio-active earth discovered by Doctor Copicus.

I had never seen it. For, on removing a little to one side, I found that the face was no longer to be descried. 'Twas the same when I essayed the other way. The thing appeared only by direct observation.

By means of this ghostly scarecrow, I apprehend, Doctor Copicus had sought to preserve his island inviolate of strangers, frightening away any ships (save those he wanted), which happened to wander near, scattering reports and rumours of terror, building on the superstitions of the sea. But why he should have employed the thing to terrify us, whom, by means of Ouvery, he had enticed hither, I could not at first understand.

However, casting back my thoughts upon past events, I saw the fact : in suborning Ouvery to the work, Doctor Copicus, no doubt, had given him a sign to show forth on his returning in our ship ; which sign being wanting at our coming to the island, he had been deceived as to what we were.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FLOAT. THE WALKING LAD.

BUT hunger and thirst, which began to work in me, diverted my thoughts.

My thirst I quenched with a draught from the water of the cataract, though it tasted brackish. Hereupon I began to walk back along the shore towards the gully by which I had descended.* But the sun began to shine scorching hot, and I had not gone far, but I was fain to turn in to a cave to shelter from the glare.

This cave was pretty deep, and the farther parts were dark. Now, by this time of my sojourn on the island, the instinct of curiosity was become habitual with me ; and I prepared to search the cave, taking out my cocoa-fibre to have set fire to it with my flint and steel. But I found it would not kindle, being damp.

However, my sight becoming something accustomed to the dim light, I began to rummage amongst the pieces of fallen rock that blocked the cave at the farther end. Here I came upon the end of a ship's cable which lay

* *This gully could not have been the ravine by which Clayton and Thalass ascended in their shore adventure. The gully must have been farther north.*

coiled in a hollow place behind a boulder. 'Twas fastened to a horse's hide.

I was perplexed as to what the thing might be, but presently knew it for a float (the horse's hide being blown up before use), and, by the same token, its use and office in the business of scaring poor mariners. For, recollecting the episode of the cut cable in the night of our coming to the island, I made small doubt that one had been sent out on the float to do the work.*

From the cave I made my way towards the gully, and so up to the higher land. Here were woods, wherein I found a banana tree full of fruit, and did eat of it very heartily. Hereupon I turned along on the summit of the cliffs towards the south, where the battery stood.

But within half a mile from thence I heard the clamour of another cliff-waterfall; and, having come to the place, and, looking over, I beheld another great stone visage. Certainly Doctor Copicus had slipped no opportunity to fashion out his images of terror!

I laughed as I thought of it, laughed at myself and at so many others thus befooled. We had been as birds frightened with scarecrows! But, on

** The episode of the cut cable and the driving ship remains obscure. The many indraughts of water caused by the creeks and waterfalls on this side of the island, however, must have occasioned many currents converging upon the shore. Accordingly, the cutting of the cable, or cables, of a ship anchored within the current-zone (the wind being subservient, or neutral), would cause that ship to drive ashore.*

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a sudden, I became sensible that I was not alone ; and, looking up, I spied the skeleton lad, Dominic, who had come out from a little thick wood in front of me.

He came towards me, walking with a slow and dreamy motion ; and, as he drew near, I saw that his eyes had a lifeless look, and, as it were, a film upon them.

I took the occasion to converse him, being curious to know many things concerning him.

“Well, Dominic,” said I pleasantly, “how do you do this fine day?”

But he continued on his way, and did pass me by without answering or taking any notice of me ; nor, indeed, did he seem so much as sensible of my presence.

I stood, staring angrily round upon him, thinking he affronted me.

“Why don’t you answer me?” cried I. “Are you, then, deaf or dumb?”

But he went on as before. Hereupon I called upon him to stand ; and, when that also was of none effect, I run and overtook him, and clutched him by the sleeve of his ragged coat.

On this he started, sighed deeply, and looked wildly round on me. This gave me a scare, so that I let go of his sleeve, and took a step back from him. I perceived I had awakened the lad from a sort of trance.

“I beg your pardon . . .” I began

“Tirralirra,” cried he, in his shrill voice, “he begs pardon of Dominic! He ought to beg pardon of the great magician.”

"What mean you?" asked I ; but he stood stock still, his head fallen upon his breast, and, when I bent forward, peering into his eyes, I saw that the lifeless and filmy look had returned upon them, and that the lad was fallen back into his strange trance.

Presently he stirred, and began to walk on with the same slow and dreamy motion as before.

I let him go his way, and went mine.

CHAPTER XXX.

HOW NOW?

As I awoke on the morrow, I felt a weight come over me : 'twas the day on which, by order of the Doctor, Ambrose was to die.

Nay, I could have wept to think that the poor man was already dead.

I got up, and, not staying for breakfast, hasted forth. I went to Ambrose's cell ; but found it empty, and nobody in the passage. I went out, and quickly traversed the wood. Coming forth upon the cliff, I saw a strange sight. The nearer slope of the rising ground hard by the fortifications, and a great semicircle of the ground below, was all covered with pirates standing or seated on the grass.

I ran to them, and then I saw what this meant. For, in the midst—that is, on the rise of the hill—stood Ambrose ; and two pirates had guard over him, bearing muskets. Those looking on made sport of the doomed man.

“He be going a long voyage, sure!” said one, “and, as parsons say, 'tis blasting hot in that port! Well then, boys, give him a rum puncheon, can't ye? for to take along with him!”

“Ay, ay,” said a second ; “there be some jolly

mates yonder will be right glad on't—Firejaw, an' Bully Crackerbones, an' Bullfrog, an'——"

"I'll warrant, they a'n't hotter than we!" put in a third, "Why, this slope be blazing like a grill! If the Doctor come not soon, I shall weigh!"

"What! and part from old Blackcoat?" returned the other, "Why, ha, ha," (turning to Ambrose), "shalt pass for a vicar in that garb! Do but troll over a little Latin—I know you can—with a *pax vobiscum* withal, and you'll make the other port!"

But Ambrose answered not a word, standing with folded arms and stern gaze bent on the ground.

"Hist!" cried one on a sudden, "the Doctor!"

On this, every man got immediately to his feet, every voice was hushed. The guards ported their muskets.

Doctor Copicus approached with slow steps, leaning upon a staff of ivory and gold. His scarlet robe and broad-brimmed hat shone glorious in the sunlight. As he drew near, I observed that every man looked this way and that, but never on him. Abashed they stood, those stalwart and swarthy pirates, like a crew of chidden schoolboys!

As for Ambrose, he gave no sign.

The Doctor regarded them with fiery eyes; and he cried fiercely:

"You madbrained, loggerheaded crew, what do you here? May not one depart this life" (pointing to Ambrose) "without being gazed

by apes? What! shall I be poisoned with your pestilent breath, ye cattle? Away! away! and hide you! Into the woods and caves, and cover you! Out of my sight!"

And, on a sudden, he fell upon them with his ivory staff, with incredible fury.

Bruised and near blinded with the thick-coming blows, those who stood within reach of them fell confusedly back, thrusting upon those behind, forcing them in upon Ambrose and the guards... The crowd swayed back and forth.

"Away! Away!" cried the Doctor in a terrible voice; and, as one man, all fled.

Borne onward by the scurrying crew, I was half-way up the hill before ever I could recover to stand ground; whilst the last fugitives went straggling by me. Yet three others, also, did there separate themselves off from the rest. They were Ambrose and the guards. The four of us wended slowly down towards the Doctor.

"How now?" said he, when we were come to him, "How now, Ambrose, my child? Are you ready to depart, passing through the secret door?"

"I am ready," answered Ambrose.

"So. And fain would I follow you, if seeing and hearing and understanding I might go! Make ready!" (to the guards) "Up with your muskets, and, when I give ye the word, when I give ye the word," repeated he, "shoot him through the head!"

Thereupon they set light to their matches; and, removing a little way from Ambrose, levelled

their guns upon him. His face was white like paper ; but he held perfectly still and gave no sign.

“ Are you ready, Ambrose ? ” said the Doctor presently, “ I see that you are ready. Have you nothing to ask of me ? No boon ? ”

“ Nay,” answered the other ; “ for hath an out-worn garment aught to ask of him who casts it away ? ”

There was silence ; and thereupon I, who had stood by until then like one spell-bound, recovered myself. I was ready to have drawn my rapier, and madly to have fallen upon the guards ; but, chancing to look at Doctor Copicus, I stopped : his face was all twisted like a child’s that is about to burst forth into strong weeping.

It held but for a moment, and passed.

“ Let the man go ! ” said Doctor Copicus.

But Ambrose sank swooning upon the grass.

CHAPTER XXXI.

NEITHER ONE NOR THE OTHER.

THAT night I dreamt a monstrous dream ; and it seemed to me that a ship anchored off the island on a dark midnight.

Then rose up the dreadful figure on the shore, and stretched forth an arm of stone, and with a stone hand laid hold on the ship, and lifted her aloft, and dropt her all shattered into the crater of the volcan. Whereupon, with a blast of sulphurous fire, the ship was blown an appalling great height into the air.

With that, I awoke ; but, though the phantasy of my dream passed away, I knew, as by an instinct, that something monstrous had, indeed, happened on the island. I felt along the wall for the little brass knob ; and, having found and pressed it, I looked round in the lighted cell. *One of the walls was rent in a long fissure !*

Scarce I had seen the thing, but the door was thrown violently open, and Ambrose came dashing in.

“ Clayton ! ” cried he, terror in his staring eyes, “ Clayton ! ”

“ An earthquake ! ” cried I, “ Was’t an earthquake ? ”

“ Ay,” answered he. “ Haste ! Come on ! If there come another, we shall be entombed ! ”

"Nay, you are in the wrong," replied Ambrose. "The earth shook. 'Twas certainly an earthquake."

"It was neither one nor the other," came the voice of Doctor Copicus, who stepped suddenly into our path.

"I say that it was neither one nor the other," said he again ; but there was no anger in his voice—nay, he smiled on us, as he added :

"Hearken, my children ! Come, walk with me and hearken, for there's somewhat I'd have you to know."

So, wondering greatly, we began to walk with him alongst the cliff.

For a while, we went without speech. Then the Doctor spoke again ; but his voice was strange and remote, as if he spoke to himself.

"Much injustice," said he, "much contumely, much wrong, I suffered at their hands. I, a scholar such as cometh not in many generations, a thinker compared with whom their subtlest heads were as wooden blocks ; I whose insight was piercing to the soul ! They despised me ! rejected me ! cast me out !

"To destroy the nation, to destroy it root and branch, to rase the populous cities, to blast the countrysides ; to find out a combustible, an explosive searching as lightning, mighty that blasting gunpowder would be, compared to it, but a puny breath—such motives, such intents, became henceforth the poles and axle of my transported mind.

"This night, my children" (turning to us)

"was that mighty thing discovered, and the combustion of but a grain of it wrought the convulsion that shook this island... A cock-boat's burden would shake me a greater island !

"Thus the power is given—and the will is taken away !

"How is my hatred broken ? dissolved and broken ? like a bubble broken ? My firm purpose, tempered in the fires of hell, is no more ! no more ! It went from me, Ambrose, when I pardoned you on the hill !"

He fell silent ; but we continued to pace along in the sombre night.

"But hearken ! mark me well ! Ambrose, you have the keeping of my parchments, what be they ?"

"The Book of Science, the Book of Poesy, the Book of Life," answered Ambrose.

"So. Therein is my wisdom stored ; therein is laid up the efficacy of my genius ; therein is traced and pencilled out my orbit and circling arcs. . ."

He broke off ; for there came a dreadful, subterraneous rumbling sound. The ground did heave beneath our feet. I was thrown staggering down.

The dread portent ceased. The earth fell quiet. But, from a point in the interior of the island, a blast of flame belched forth into the night ! *

* *Perhaps the explosion of the "grain" of the Doctor's "combustible" which had "wrought the convulsion," had, at the same time, released the pent-up forces of the "volcan."*

CHAPTER XXXII.

HELL SHORE.

BUT the dread geyser gave no light, and the darkness about me was black. I could see neither the Doctor nor Ambrose ; and, when I called to them, there came no answer.

Suddenly something leapt forth from the thicket and seized hold on me. It was a man ; it was Thalass.

"Quickly ! Quickly !" cried he. "I keep you safe ! I have boat !"

Hereupon he began to hurry me along faster and faster.

The air became sulphurous and laden with heated dust and ashes. A rumbling, low and ominous, sounded intermittently from the region of the volcan. The woods were full of the crying of terrified beasts ; and presently, from afar, came the voices of men.

The darkness became tinged with a ruddy glow. A fierce roaring sound arose. I looked up, to see that all about the volcan, which continued to belch forth fire, the woods were kindled and roaring in a holocaust.

Scouring hard behind the Indian, I presently descended with him a gully of the cliff, coming safe to the shore. There he led me to a cave, wherein lay housed a little, stout cockle-boat,

hewn all out of a great tree-trunk. In the stern was a leathern sack full of bread, and a jar of water. I helped him to hale her down the narrow strip of shore. The breakers foamed and gnashed like things possessed.

And now began the island to quake and to be shaken to pieces: the cliffs split in flaws and fissures, with stupendous sounds; the roar that came to us from the woodland bespoke a deluge of fire, over which, no doubt, the volcan reared high its infernal plume.

"Quickly! Quickly!" cried Thalass, when the boat was gotten down. "Get 'e in! Get 'e in! Her good fine boat! No sink! no break! I made 'e, fine! beautiful!"

"But you?" said I; "there's no room."

For I perceived that the little boat would hold but one.

But there came a dreadful thundering of the cliff, and fragments of rock fell about us like hail. Lifting me bodily into the boat, Thalass launched her forth, running out through the breakers, and giving her at the last a mighty impulse. I beheld for a moment his stern, hard-favoured face shining like bronze in the livid light—and saw it no more for ever!

Tossed in the turmoil of the boiling sea, the boat blundered out beyond the breakers, vaulting nimbly over the surges. I clutched her sides, seared and scalded and near stifled with the smoke and fiery spume and dust that blew whirling down upon me from the erupting and burning island. A giddiness came over me. I

fought against it hard, with shut eyes, bringing the whole force of my will on the resolve to endure and live.

There came the sound of singing.

The roar of the holocaust in the woods was abated, the wind coming about from the sea ; the cliffs, for a space, had ceased to thunder ; and, faint and small, but clear and serene and bewitching sweet, there sounded that phantom voice singing.

Struck out of myself with amazement, I forgot all my peril as I listened.

And thus it was :

Stay not in the land of sighing,
Stay not in the vale of tears ;
Where the phantom of the years
Haunts the weary and the dying :
Lo ! the Island of the Holy ;
Hie you hither presently,
From a land of melancholy,
From a land of misery.

Straining my eyes upon the livid-looming cliffs vaulted with fire, I made out a meagre form standing upon the shore.

As the singing ceased, there came a sheet of light, a tongue of flame, that, serpent-like, wound coiling down ; and then I saw the singer.
'Twas the skeleton antic lad !

For a moment, the lull in the Inferno-storm continued. Then, on a sudden, there came a stupendous loud report ; and, wave upon wave, and sheet upon sheet, a sulphurous blue flame swept, coiling and writhing, down the face of the cliff, down upon the little lad !

It leapt upon him ; it lapt him round in clinging, entwining wraiths ; it encircled his floating hair with tongues of flame. Thus, for a moment, he stood transfigured ; and then came the end !

A giant boulder crashed from the summit of the lofty cliff headlong down ; and, rebounding upon a spur of rock that projected almost to the place where the lad stood, it took him upon the head, and on the instant killed him.

But this was a merciful thing. For, hard upon the falling boulder, there came an avalanche, an avalanche of molten stone !

It roared down the cliff ; it swept over the shore. At its touch, the sea reared madly up in an appalling great wave, hissing out clouds of steam that veiled the livid light.

And upon me then there had fallen a dreadful fate : to be whelmed in burning lava !

I saw it coming, the wave of torment and of death. I gazed with a horrid fascination on its livid front, livid and black and shimmering like silver slime ; and that instant was swollen thousandfold with agony.

In the next, by a sudden strong rebuff of the clashing seas, my boat was jerked slanting up, and cast upon the beakhead of the pirate barque !

She had lasked away from her moorings ; and, unchecked by her drunken and amazed custodians, had blundered round to save me.

THE END.

SUPPLEMENT.

The manner of my preservation from the Haunted Island, as well as other particulars, may seem to many of my readers incredible ; and some, perhaps, will not stickle to brand the whole relation as a fabulous tale.

I can only say, and I do aver it, that herein I have set down nothing but what really fell out in my experience, described nothing but what I really saw in my brief sojourn on the island ; which is a misfortune one way, leaving some things inevitably obscure.

As to what happened to me after my escape in the pirate barque, 'tis beyond the drift of my relation, since nothing further transpired concerning the island itself. Indeed, as I believe, 'twas not only utterly devastated by that dreadful eruption and conflagration, but sunk to the bottom of the sea. And, as one returned from those parts did tell me, there goes a rumour amongst seafaring men of an enchanted island at the bottom of the sea. Perchance it was set on foot by those pirates who escaped with me ; for, certainly, we alone survived.

I owed my preservation from their hands at first, mainly to the fact that they were always fuddled with drink ; like a drunken ship, she

drove, in fair weather and foul, with only her topsails abroad, our course (if a course it can be called), being generally westward. At length, after many days, and when both our drink and victuals were nigh consumed, we drove blundering ashore upon an unknown and uninhabited island.

This brought the pirates to their senses ; and, having no more drink to befuddle themselves with, they began to amend, and took thought how to preserve their lives. In this time also, they took a notion into their superstitious heads, that'twas for my sake they had been miraculously preserved, so that I was, as it were, the contrary to a Jonah unto them.

The ship had grounded on a shoal, in calm weather ; and, not being stuck very fast, we contrived to float her off. Having anchored her, we went all on shore, to fill our jars and to lade cocoanuts and plantains, and afterwards loosed to sea again, committing ourselves to the conduct of God. For there was not a navigator among us, and we had quite lost our reckoning.

At length, we came to another island, where we anchored again, filled our jars, and laded more cocoanuts and plantains ; and so on from island to island : sometimes suffering dreadful privations in the vast desolate sea, when we despaired in our minds of seeing land ever any more ; sometimes at imminent peril of our lives from savages and cannibals—yet marvellously preserved, until, at last, having wandered about for above two years, by the mercy of God, we came to the Island of Mindanao of the Philippine Islands ; whence we

O

stretched across to the coast of China, towards the Isle of Macao.

Here was a Portuguese ship about to sail, and I went on board of her. But the pirates remained behind.

From Lisbon I got me a passage to Plymouth ; and so home to Clayton Manor, where, with my father, the Squire, I dwell unto this day.

(I thank Mr. N. W. Physick for his drawing of a King's ship.—E. H. Visiak.)

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